

et al.: Prayer in Mission

PRAYER

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Editorial

Many people living in affluence and prosperity have a difficult time making prayer a high priority. After all, when things go well and when money is available to provide for most needs, many find it difficult to spend quality time in prayer and other spiritual pursuits. However, things do go better with prayer! This is especially true of mission and ministry, since both are so closely tied to spiritual activities.

This issue of the *Journal of Adventist Mission Studies* has several articles dealing with prayer and mission. Conrad Vine, the president of Adventist Frontier Missions (AFM), writes on prayer and fasting when dealing with crises in mission, and the front-line workers for AFM are often faced with daunting challenges. Another AFM workers, John Holbrook, shares how prayer breaks down barriers of hostility, and Susan Payne, the Development Director at AFM, writes on the impact and importance of prayer when working with donors.

Ann Hamel's article on "The Psychology of Prayer: A Theosomatic (Psycho-Spiritual) Approach to Missionary Care" has excellent material documenting the healing effects of prayer for those who have experienced trauma and the article also offers a brief historical sketch of missionary care.

Jacques Yves Mbende presents a challenging article and suggests how a healing ministry can be an important step leading to discipleship. It has also been my experience that when working among those in the world religions or among secular or postmodern people, many need a faith-building experience like healing or deliverance in order to be willing to listen to a presentation about the Good News.

Most Christians would agree that prayer makes a difference and that prayer allows God to engage in situations and impact individuals in ways that he does not do in the absence of prayer. Knowing this, it is strange that missionaries and Christian workers do not make prayer a higher priority. It is also troubling that many ministerial training programs and seminaries do not offer even one course dealing with the various aspects of prayer. Perhaps this also reflects Western cultural traits of self-sufficiency and independence.

Be challenged by this issue on prayer.

Bruce Bauer, editor

CONRAD VINE

Prayer and Fasting: A Response to Crisis in Mission

Fasting—God’s Promise to His People

“If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land” (2 Chr 7:14). This passage has not only encouraged me to pray more, but has also encouraged me to fast whenever contemplating a potentially life-changing decision. God has graciously grown my own understanding of the connection between fasting and mission to the point where fasting and prayer are now my basic response to a crisis in mission. A recent example in Adventist Frontier Missions (AFM), the ministry where I serve, will demonstrate the relationship.

Fasting and Prayer in Mission—A 2013 Example

In early 2013, our project leader in a West African country received a threat from a previously unknown group demanding that AFM stop teaching Bible at our school of more than 300 students. After prayer and counsel with the AFM leadership, the project leader visited with local officials, and to his dismay was instructed to cease morning prayers and open the school for classes each Sabbath. After a season of prayer, AFM decided to close the school for 10 days. The AFM leadership team back in the home office gathered together and called for 10 days of prayer and fasting. For each of the 10 days, colleagues fasted and prayed. We fasted and prayed to humble ourselves before God and ask that he would be glorified in the local region. We claimed the promise of 2 Chr 7:14. Around the world, AFM family members and supporters joined in solemn prayer and fasting.

On the first day of prayer and fasting, a local official visited the school and addressed the students in an assembly, instructing them to refuse to participate in the morning worship service. The students rejected his

counsel and threatened to riot. In a moment of supreme irony, our team leader had to rescue the official from the angry students!

On the third day of prayer and fasting, a meeting of the parents resulted in overwhelming support for our Adventist principles of education (though less than five percent are Adventist), and a delegation of vociferous parents visited the local officials. On the fifth day of prayer and fasting, a local official came to apologize for the difficulties being caused for our school and our students, but the restrictions were still in force.

On the seventh day of prayer and fasting, a delegation arrived from two national ministries in the capital. After a detailed investigation, they declared publicly that our school was doing nothing wrong, and we were free to operate the school according to Adventist principles.

On the tenth day of prayer and fasting, our school reopened—with Bible classes, morning worship and prayers, and with a continued honoring of the Lord's Sabbath day! A candle may not appear to give much light at midday, but when the darkness gathers, the candle's light is visible to all! God indeed was glorified throughout that local community and country—a truly wonderful day!

Through that experience, God was indeed glorified—and within a month there was a surge of baptisms among a highly resistant people group. AFM in that situation had resisted the temptation to rush into action and seek human solutions, but recognized instead that behind the physical threat was a spiritual threat. Our response had to seek for a spiritual solution, so we claimed the promise of 2 Chr 7:14 and waited in humble prayer for God to work out his perfect will. In the following sections I will note the concepts of fasting and prayer in the Scriptures.

Fasting in the OT Scriptures

In the 2 Chr 7:14 passage, to “humble oneself” before God means to fast. Fasting in the Bible is not an end in itself nor is it a competitive sport. It is a means by which people worship God and submit themselves in humility before him. Believers cannot make God love them any more if they fast. Nor do they fast to manipulate God. Rather, they fast and pray for results, but the results are in God's hands.

In fasting, the results glorify God in the person who fasts and in others for whom God's people fast and pray. When Christians fast, they literally carve out multiple hours each day to rest in the presence of God in humble prayer rather than engaging in food purchasing, preparation, eating, and cleaning up. Fasting is a cessation of engaging in the vanity of human responses, giving room for God to demonstrate his glory and power.

Elmer Towns (1996) argues that Christians can find the true fruit of

the fasting God seeks in Isa 58:6-8. His summary of the types of fasts are outlined below:

Verse in Isaiah 58	Name of Fast	Purpose of Fast
v. 6. "To loose the bands of wickedness"	The Disciples Fast	To free ourselves and others from addictions to sin (Matt 17:21)
v. 6. "To undo the heavy burdens"	The Ezra Fast	To solve problems, inviting the Holy Spirit's aid to lift loads and overcome barriers that impede our walk with God (Ezra 8:23)
v. 6. "To let the oppressed go free"	The Samuel Fast	For revival and soul-winning, to identify with God's people enslaved by sin and asking God to deliver them into his Kingdom (1 Sam 7:6)
v. 6. "To break every yoke"	The Elijah Fast	To conquer the emotional and mental problems that would control us, and return control to God (1 Kgs 19:4,8)
v. 7. "To share our bread with the hungry"	The Widow's Fast	To care for the poor and meet the basic needs of others in their hour of need (1 Kgs 17:16)
v. 8. To allow God's light "to break forth like the morning"	The Apostle Paul Fast	To bring clearer perspective and insight as we make decisions (Acts 9:9)
v. 8. So that "health shall spring forth"	The Daniel Fast	To gain a healthier life, a clearer mind, or for physical healing (Dan 1:8)
v. 8. So "your righteousness shall go before you"	The John the Baptist Fast	That our testimony and witness for Jesus will be enhanced before others, that it will shine brighter (Luke 1:15)
v. 8. That "the glory of the Lord" will protect you from the evil one	The Esther Fast	That God will protect his people from the attacks of Satan, either directly or through human or other material agencies (Esth 4:16, 5:2)

According to Towns, fasting brings certain physical benefits: (1) it helps overcome food addictions, (2) it gives our digestive system a rest, (3) it contributes to lower cholesterol, lower blood pressure, relief from arthritis, loss of body mass and weight, and helps our bodies fight cancer, and (4) it contributes to improved mental health, including providing a calming effect, helping us to focus on priorities, clearing our mind of impurities, elevating thought patterns, and providing an important component of the overall treatment of a variety of mental health disorders.

At a much deeper spiritual level however, Isa 58 lays out the spiritual fruit of fasting, which includes the "Esther Fast" for God's protection from satanic agencies, the "Disciples Fast" to deliver Satan's prey from demonic bonds, and the "John the Baptist Fast" that our testimony and witness for Jesus Christ will shine brighter when we launch our mission. All of these fasts occur within the context of mission or wherever there is a direct confrontation between the powers of good and evil, when the Kingdom of God is irrupting into areas and lives hitherto fore controlled by the Prince of Darkness.

An instructive example of the relationship between prayer, fasting, and mission is found in the life of the prophet Daniel. In Daniel 10, Daniel is engaged in spiritual warfare in exactly the manner later commanded by Jesus. Daniel records that he had been on a partial fast for 21 days and that at the end of this extended period of prayer and fasting he received a vision in which Jesus Christ personally appeared to him. During the vision, it was revealed to Daniel that for the duration of his fast there had been intense spiritual warfare beyond the realm of human physical perception,

with the territorial demon of Persia withstanding angelic interventions until Michael (Jesus Christ) had to personally intervene to gain the victory in the supernatural realm and for God's people in the temporal realm.

In this story, we find that Daniel's prayer and fasting for 21 days mirrored an intense supernatural conflict between fallen and unfallen beings, which was only brought to a conclusion by the personal intervention of Jesus Christ. Interestingly, this crucial and successful intervention of Jesus Christ in the supernatural realm before the main vision of Daniel 11–12 is given prefigures the final and successful intervention of Jesus Christ in the natural realm of human history on behalf of his people at the end of time, which is revealed at the end of the vision that is given to Daniel in this episode from his life (Dan 12:1). Daniel's role in the conflict of mission was to pray and fast, and Jesus' role was to gain victory over the hostile demonic forces on behalf of his praying prophet.

Fasting in the NT Scriptures

In the NT, it is suggested in Matt 6:16–18 that Jesus assumes his followers will fast as a normal part of their discipleship. Many Christians tend to understand this passage in the context of personal devotional habits. However, in Mark 16:15–18, Matt 10:1, and Luke 9:1, Jesus gave very specific commands to his disciples in the context of charging them for mission outreach. All three Synoptic Gospels are united in the specifics of what the Twelve were commanded to do: to preach the Good News; to heal the sick; and to cast out demons. Even when Jesus commissioned the seventy-two (Luke 10:1, 17–19), he gave them the authority to cast out demons and to deliver the victims of satanic oppression. After his ascension, the book of Acts notes that the apostles and disciples took Jesus literally and went around proclaiming the Good News, healing the sick, and casting out demons (Acts 5:12–16, 8:5–8).

In the famous mission story of Matt 17:14–21, where the disciples were confronting the powers of darkness as they proclaimed the Good News, it states that the disciples found themselves unable to cast out a demon. When Jesus arrived on the scene, he magisterially rebuked the demon and delivered the boy. "And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour. Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting" (Matt 17:18–21 KJV).

Jesus in this passage counseled prayer and fasting as the appropriate faith response of his disciples when involved in demonic encounters, that is he encouraged a turning to God for deliverance rather than attempting to directly confront demonic beings in one's own strength, which was later attempted by the seven sons of Sceva and resulted in a severe beating from the evil spirit for each of them (Acts 17:11–17).

The testimony of Scripture encourages us to realize that Jesus Christ has never lost in any conflict with Satan, and since the showdown in the wilderness (Matt 4:1–11), he has the right and authority to deliver any captive of Satan (Mark 3:27) either directly or through the ministry of his servants. Within that wilderness showdown, Jesus Christ himself fasted and prayed for 40 days and 40 nights before the encounter with Satan, providing an example to his disciples of how victory in mission can be accomplished.

Turning to Jesus' teaching on how his disciples are to pray, we find the Lord's Prayer rendered thus in the KJV:

"After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen" (Matt 6:9–13).

The NIV provides a more accurate translation of the second phrase of v. 13, "but deliver us from the evil one," a translation that is also included in the NRSV and NAB. The NIV, NRSV, and NAB translations are to be preferred, because Jesus literally commands his disciples to pray each day for deliverance "from the evil one."

Jesus does not teach his disciples to pray for daily deliverance from evil as an abstract concept, but for daily deliverance from a personal, malevolent evil being. God's people cannot withstand this personal malevolent being in their own strength, but must turn to God each day for protection from what must be presumed are daily demonic attacks. Rev 12 and 1 Pet 5 indicate clearly the identity of the attacker of Jesus' disciples—Satan, the Devil, the ancient serpent of Eden, the dragon, the deceiver of the whole world, the roaring lion seeking whom he may devour, together with his fallen angels (demons).

Turning to the life of the Apostle Paul, perhaps the most famous missionary in Christian history, it is clear that prayer and fasting were integral to his mission. Immediately prior to the first missionary journey, the body of disciples in Antioch was gathered in prayer and fasting. While gathered in prayer and fasting, they were given guidance by the Holy Spirit to set aside Paul and Barnabas for a work of God. In response to this leading of

the Holy Spirit for the beginning of Gentile mission work, the disciples of Antioch, together with Paul and Barnabas, responded with more fasting and prayer (Acts 13:2–3).

Writing later in his ministry, Paul gave clear counsel to the church of Ephesus on the spiritual reality of the struggle to which God had called them. “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. Put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places” (Eph 6:10–12 NRSV). The conflict the Body of Christ is engaged in is not primarily with our own fallen desires as if in a vacuum, but ultimately against a personal malevolent being called Satan who commands countless fallen angels, and who seeks to destroy every human being (1 Pet 5:6–9).

Rev 16:13–14 indicates that the final attacks on God’s people and attempts to corral the world’s population into overt rebellion against God will occur under the inspiration of three demonic spirits. The visible means may differ, such as obvious occultic activities such as black or white magic, mediums, astrology, tarot cards, Ouija boards, etc., or through a seemingly more innocent media such as Hollywood movies, popular television shows, or the lyrics of modern music. The means of attack will differ from individual to individual and from one body of disciples to another, but the underlying inspiration will remain of demonic origin and the purpose will be to inspire hatred of and hostility to God himself. Rev 12:17 indicates that at the end of time, Satan will “make war” on God’s true people, necessitating a response of prayer and fasting perhaps like never before.

Within this overall context, is it realistic to expect that the commands of Jesus Christ to those whom he sent out as his representatives to engage in mission (to preach the Good News, to heal the sick, and to deliver the victims of demonic oppression) would not apply down to the final conflict between good and evil? The commands of Jesus to heal the sick, deliver Satan’s prey, and preach the Good News were never time-limited, so we must conclude that the injunction to pray and fast, particularly in the context of spiritual warfare and the arrival of the Good News in territory previously controlled by demonic forces, holds true today.

Prayer and Fasting in the Writings of Ellen G. White

In the writings of Ellen White, who is considered to be an inspired and authoritative writer within the Seventh-day Adventist Church, we find a similar understanding to the relationship between prayer, fasting, and mission.

We are to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and comfort the suffering and afflicted. We are to minister to the despairing, and to inspire hope in the hopeless. The love of Christ, manifested in unselfish ministry, will be more effective in reforming the evildoer than will the sword or the court of justice. These are necessary to strike terror to the law-breaker, but the loving missionary can do more than this. Often the heart that hardens under reproof will melt under the love of Christ. The missionary can not only relieve physical maladies, but he can lead the sinner to the Great Physician, who can cleanse the soul from the leprosy of sin. Through His servants, God designs that the sick, the unfortunate, and those possessed of evil spirits shall hear His voice. Through His human agencies He desires to be a comforter such as the world knows not. (1942:106)

Not only does Ellen White state that victims of satanic oppression will hear the voice of God through a “loving missionary” but God’s witnesses are also counseled on how such victims are to be delivered.

They [those who are victims of demonic possession or attack] should entreat those who have had a religious experience, and who have faith in the promises of God, to plead with the mighty Deliverer in their behalf. It will be a close conflict. Satan will reinforce his evil angels who have controlled these persons; but if the saints of God with deep humility fast and pray, their prayers will prevail. Jesus will commission holy angels to resist Satan, and he will be driven back and his power broken from off the afflicted ones. (1948:344)

White in this quotation counsels fasting, prayer, and deep humility as the primary means by which God’s witnesses petition God to deliver the victims of satanic oppression. She does not counsel any of the strategies of some modern deliverance ministries, such as prayer walks, claiming cities for Jesus Christ, aggressively seeking for demons, entering into dialogue with demons, challenging demons to reveal their names, interrogating or parleying with them. Rather, she counsels disciples of Jesus Christ to turn to God with humble spirits in prayer and fasting, asking the One who has never lost an encounter with Satan to deliver the prey of demonic attack. White’s counsels directly reflect what is found in the Scriptures.

Conclusion

The experience of prayer and fasting narrated above in an African country did not occur within a theological or spiritual vacuum. Prayer and fasting in the OT and NT are identified as the primary response of God’s people when engaged in spiritual conflict. Spiritual conflict occurs whenever God’s people are engaged in mission—it is the inevitable

consequence of mission. Just as Jesus was opposed by demonic forces in the storm of Galilee (Mark 4:35–41) when he crossed over into pagan Gentile territory, where he in turn met a man possessed by multiple demons, so Jesus' disciples today will face human and demonic opposition whenever they seek to advance the Kingdom of God (see 2 Cor 12:7). In such circumstances, Jesus' disciples' primary response is to humble themselves before God in prayer and fasting, rejecting the vanity of human (and fruitless) intervention, and allowing God to be glorified in the situation.

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L. ANN HAMEL

The Psychology of Prayer: A Theosomatic (Psycho-Spiritual) Approach to Missionary Care

Introduction

It was just before 4 p.m. when I received news that the 23-year-old son of a missionary couple had died that morning. After consulting with my colleagues at the General Conference, I purchased a ticket to go and support the family and the mission community where this young man and his family were serving. My flight would leave the following morning at 8 a.m.

I had met the family when they attended Mission Institute at Andrews University a couple years ago. Both the husband and wife had just completed advanced degrees at Andrews and were looking forward to using their training in the cause of God to advance his kingdom. Their oldest son was not with them when they attended mission institute so I had not met him. Although I left as quickly as I possibly could, I still did not make it in time for his funeral.

Unfortunately, I have made these kinds of trips before and they are always difficult. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all quote Jesus as saying “Anyone who desires to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me” (Matt 16:24, Mark 8:34, Luke 9:23). Those who accept a call to foreign missions accept Jesus’ invitation to self-denial and sacrifice in a very real sense. As missionaries leave family, friends, and homeland behind in order to carry the gospel to the world, they willingly embrace the self-sacrifice inherent in the calling. Few, however, are prepared for the incredibly high level of sacrifice that some are asked to make.

A History of Missionary Care

In looking at the challenges that Seventh-day Adventists face in supporting the missionaries they send out, particularly during times of crisis, it is helpful to understand some of the history of the field that

is known today as missionary care or “member care.” Kelly O’Donnell provides a historical overview of how member care has become an “international and interdisciplinary field” designed to support and care for missionaries in both the April 2015 issue of the *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* as well as the first chapter of his 2011 book *Global Member Care Volume One: The Pearls and Perils of Good Practice*. The terms *member care* and *missionary care* were used interchangeably in the 1980s. However, member care began to be used more extensively in the 1990s as a “neutral term, which could be more readily used in settings where surveillance and security were an issue” (O’Donnell 2011:509).

O’Donnell points out that the need to support and care for missionaries began with a recognition of the need for training. Missionary sending agencies found that without preparation for cross-cultural service, otherwise well-trained missionaries were returning home prematurely. To address this need, Missionary Internship was established in Michigan in 1954. In 1992 it moved from Michigan to Colorado Springs and in 1996 it became Mission Training International (MTI). MTI trains thousands of evangelical missionaries today and offers a wide variety of services to missionary sending agencies.

Leaders within the Adventist Church recognized the need to train missionaries about this same time. In 1956 the Annual Council of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists voted to develop a “Missionary Orientation Program.” Although funds were put in reserve to develop such a program it was ten years before it actually became a reality. In 1965 the Department of World Mission was officially established as a part of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary located at Andrews University. In the summer of 1966, M. O. Manley and Gottfried Oosterwal led out in the first mission institute, which was held on the campus of Andrews University with 22 adults in attendance.

Evangelicals also took steps to provide Christian mental health care for their missionaries. Dan Blazer, psychiatrist and former dean of medical education at Duke University, says that the Christian psychiatry movement in the United States today grew out of evangelical Protestantism (Blazer 1998). Prior to the 1950s and 1960s most conservative Christians believed that all psychology was anti-biblical. Indeed, a majority of psychologists and psychiatrists *were* anti-biblical and saw both Christian beliefs and Christian practices as unhealthy. However, according to John Weaver, Clyde Narramore “almost single-handedly” founded the Christian psychology movement that exists today. Narramore was a licensed psychologist in southern California who began a radio talk show, which aired on more than 200 Christian radio stations for more than 40 years. The publication of his book *The Psychology of Counseling* became “one of

the most influential books in the history of Christian counseling” (Weaver 2015:210). In 1958, the Narramore Christian Foundation was established as the first international Christian counseling and training ministry to provide mental health care for missionaries, ministers, other Christian workers and Christian lay people.

In the mid-1950s evangelical Christian mental health professionals began to meet together to explore ways to integrate biblical principles into the fields of psychology and psychiatry. This led to the formation of the Christian Association for Psychological Studies (CAPS) in 1956. In 1964, Fuller Theological Seminary developed a doctoral program in clinical psychology. The following year Link Care Center was established to care for missionaries, pastors, and other Christian workers. In 1968 Wycliffe Bible Translators also established a counseling department to care for their missionaries. Clyde Narramore also founded the Rosemead School of Psychology in 1970. Rosemead began to publish the *Journal of Psychology and Theology* in 1973, which was the first journal of its kind with a primary focus on the integration of psychology and theology. In 1982, the Christian Association for Psychological Studies (CAPS) began publication of the *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*. A number of training programs and missionary care programs were also opened during the 1980s. Wheaton College, “the influential evangelical flagship school” opened a clinical psychology program during this time. Organizations like Barnabas International were also established in the 1980s. Barnabas is a missionary care agency whose primary focus is the emotional and spiritual care of missionaries.

According to O'Donnell, it was in the 1970s when mental health professionals began to gain influence within the evangelical mission community. Christian mental health professionals, many with mission experience themselves, made valuable contributions to the training and care of missionaries. However, “the blending of psychology and missions” was still in its early stages (O'Donnell 2011:544). Christian mental health professionals had to earn the trust of those in missions. In November 1980 a group of mental health professionals met together to collaborate on how to best serve the needs of missionaries. This meeting was the first in what was to become the annual Mental Health and Missions Conference, which is held in Angola, Indiana, every November. Collaborative relationships were developed between mental health professionals and mission administrators as they came together to discuss ideas and strategies on how to best care for missionaries.

The Institute of World Mission was also proactive in trying to integrate psychology into the training program of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, albeit in a somewhat limited fashion. From the beginning,

missionaries were all given a personality test and an opportunity to meet with a psychologist as a part of the institute program. Only recently have provisions been made to provide mental health care and support for missionaries while they are on the field, during times of crisis, and as they transition back to their homelands.

Interestingly, the 1980s were also a time when the historical rift that existed between the fields of psychology and religion was at its height. Albert Ellis, founder of Rational Emotive Behavioral Therapy and one of the most influential psychologists of the twentieth century, was overtly critical of religion. Ellis published an article in 1980 in the *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, the leading journal of the American Psychological Association, in which he stated “devout, orthodox, or dogmatic religion (what we might call religiosity) is significantly correlated with emotional disturbance” (1980:637). Ellis believed that the less religious a person was the more emotionally healthy they would be. At this same time, the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* (DSM-III-R) published in 1980, which is used to diagnose mental illness, often used religious descriptions to illustrate serious psychopathology. Only 3 of the 125 medical schools in the United States at that time, even those operated by religious institutions, offered courses on the relationship between faith and health or incorporated spirituality into their curriculums. In fact, according to Harold Koenig, religious influences had been removed for the treatment of psychiatric patients, even in religiously affiliated institutions such as Duke University. One had to get explicit authorization to have a visit from a pastor or a hospital chaplain if a person was admitted to a psychiatric ward (Koenig 2005:26). Although surveys showed during the 1980s and early 1990s that 96% of the American people believed in God, between 57 and 74% of psychologists and up to 75% of psychiatrists at that time claimed that they did not (Koenig 2005:26).

Twenty-five years ago this summer, my husband and I were returning to our home in Rwanda with our three young sons when we rounded a corner and met an on-coming truck head-on. My next memory is awakening in a hospital bed in Brussels, Belgium, not knowing where I was or how I had gotten there. After being unconscious for four days, I learned that my husband had been killed instantly and had already been buried in Rwanda. I also learned that my three-year-old son was four floors above me in the pediatrics’ unit. His skull had been fractured, his leg was crushed and two toes were missing. My six-year-old and eight-year-old sons were still in Rwanda. They had been the only two family members at their father’s funeral.

I returned to the States in 1990 at a time when it was difficult to find a Christian mental health professional that was able to help me deal with

the emotional *and* the spiritual aspects of the trauma I had experienced. Although a majority of mental health professionals at that time did not believe in God, at least half of psychologists and a quarter of psychiatrists did. Many of these coped with the apparent conflict between psychology and religion by keeping the two separate. As Koenig noted, spiritual issues were simply not a part of the therapeutic process, even among Christian mental health professionals. As a missionary who had given my life to serving God, it was impossible for me to separate the emotional and the spiritual aspects of what I had experienced.

In developing a missionary care program for the Seventh-day Adventist Church, it is important to recognize the enormous contribution that Evangelical Christians made when they took steps to integrate biblical teachings and faith into the practice of psychology and psychiatry. They wrote books, published professional journals, developed clinical training programs, and established professional organizations. They used their skills to equip and train missionaries for more effective service and to care for them when they needed mental health care. Although research was being done in the secular world during this same period of time that would eventually change how the scientific world viewed religion, particularly how it viewed the role of prayer, these mental health professionals led the way and a great deal can be learned from their examples.

Research on Prayer

Research began in the second half of the 20th century that eventually changed how the medical and scientific world came to view prayer. There were a number of significant players whose research has been instrumental in bringing this about. Dr. Herbert Benson, a cardiologist and researcher from Harvard Medical School, studied the impact of stress on the body in the late 1960s and early 1970s. As a result of his research, Benson found that our bodies are imbued with what he termed “the relaxation response—an inducible, physiologic state of quietude” (2001:xvii). Benson identified the relaxation response as a function of the parasympathetic nervous system. It is designed to counter the stress response, which is a function of the sympathetic nervous system or the arousal system. Benson found multiple approaches that could be used to elicit the relaxation response. In fact, he found that every major religion in the world had a way of eliciting the relaxation response through prayer, meditation, or ritual. He published his findings in a book entitled *The Relaxation Response* in 1975. When teaching patients to elicit the relaxation response, Benson would offer them both secular and religious approaches. He found, to his surprise, that 80% of his patients would choose prayer (Benson 1996:152).

Jeff Levin almost stumbled onto prayer in his research. While still a graduate student in epidemiology in 1982, Levin came across research that showed that men who attended church regularly had lower blood pressure than those who did not. This was so contradictory to what was being taught in the medical world at that time that Levin sought to determine if there was indeed a relationship between religious practices and health. Over the next five years he identified more than 200 peer-reviewed articles that statistically linked religious involvement and health. Levin's research showed conclusively, from an epidemiological perspective, that people who follow a religious path live longer and are healthier than people who do not (Levin 2001:vii). In 1987 he published a seminal paper entitled, "Is There a Religious Factor in Health?" which ultimately changed how the medical world viewed the impact of religion on health.

Larry Dossey, a physician of internal medicine from Dallas, Texas, developed an interest in Levin's work and began to follow his findings. Dossey did his own research into the impact of prayer and in 1989 he published *Recovering the Soul: A Scientific and Spiritual Search*, and in 1993 he published *Healing Words: The Power of Prayer and the Practice of Medicine*. Dossey's book had a profound impact on the practice of medicine and eventually on medical school education. Before his 1993 book was published, only 3 of the 120 medical schools in the United States had courses devoted to exploring the role of religion in health. As a result of Dossey's work and that of others, today nearly 80 medical schools have such courses, many of which use Dossey's books as textbooks. The impact has been tremendous. A survey done by the American Academy of Family Physicians has found that 99% of family physicians currently believe that religious beliefs can help the healing process (Holtz 1996).

Another significant player in the spirituality/health connection is Harold Koenig. In 1998 Koenig founded the Center for the Study of Religion/Spirituality and Health at Duke University, which is the world's first major research facility to comprehensively study the impact of people's religious life on their physical and emotional health. Dr. Koenig has published extensively in the field of mental health and religion. His research has been featured on dozens of national and international TV networks, radio programs, newspapers, and magazines. He has been invited to speak before the United States Senate and before the House of Representatives concerning the benefits of religion and spirituality on health (Koenig 2014).

The late David B. Larson, both a psychiatrist and epidemiologist and founder of the National Institute of Healthcare Research, devoted many years to reviewing the scientific evidence linking religion and health. According to Larson, when he "looked at the available empirical research

on the relationship between religion and health, the findings were overwhelmingly positive” (Levin 2001:9). In a journal response to Albert Ellis, Larson challenged Ellis as a scientist to put aside his own personal bias related to the negative impact of religion on health and to acknowledge the “abundant scientific evidence” to the contrary. In 2000 Ellis did just this. He wrote an article published in *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, in which he stated that although he had, “in the past, taken a negative attitude toward religion, and especially toward people who devoutly hold religious views, I now see that absolutistic views can sometimes lead to emotionally healthy behavior” (2000:31). In this article Ellis acknowledged the research that had led him to this new position.

In 2001 Jeff Levin published *God, Faith, and Health* in which he outlined seven principles of theosomatic medicine. These principles describe the impact of spirituality and religious practices on health. The first six of these seven principles describe how religion promotes health by reinforcing healthy lifestyle behaviors, nurturing supportive relationships, and promoting hope and optimism (Levin 2001:11). While the first six of Levin’s principles can be explained in scientific terms, the seventh principle reflects how prayer promotes health and healing in ways that cannot always be explained scientifically. For the seventh principle, Levin proposed that the impact of prayer on health can possibly be explained by “one more possibility—namely, that there is a God or divine presence that can choose to bless us in ways that may violate the apparent physical laws of the universe” (2001:183). Levin says that prayer is a natural part of most of people’s lives and has always been a part of religious worship. As mental health professionals look at missionary care, it is important to examine more closely the Christian concept of prayer.

What Is Prayer?

Dr. Russell Staples, former chair of the Department of World Mission at Andrews University, says that prayer is the means by which human beings are invited to commune with God and encounter him on a relational level. Ellen White says that “prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend. Not that it is necessary in order to make known to God what we are, but in order to enable us to receive Him” (1908:93). Margaret Poloma says that “the single most important characteristic of effective prayer is the ability to commune with God. Prayer needs to go beyond ritual, opening the door to a relationship with the One for whom the human heart was made” (1991:xi).

Most people pray, and some people pray several times a day. The General Social Survey’s analysis of national data between 1972 and 2006 suggests that 97% of Americans pray, with more than half indicating that they

pray one or more times a day (General Social Survey:2008; Spilka 2013:3). Gallup reports have shown for more than five decades that nine out of ten Americans pray. A Pew Research survey conducted in 2013 found that eight out of ten Americans pray, and more than half (55%) indicate that they pray every day. PEW found that even among those who do not claim to be religiously affiliated, 21% said they pray daily. PEW also found that among atheists and agnostics, 6% said they pray daily. Another 11% of the atheists and agnostics indicate that they pray weekly or monthly. The General Social Survey (2008) found that “approximately 30% of those who state that they do not believe in God nonetheless admit to praying” (Spilka 2013:37).

So why do people pray? When an atheist prays, to whom are they praying? One atheist posted on-line, “I do pray every day. I have always prayed. I will always pray. The only difference is that I know no one is listening to my prayers and I’m fine with that” (Do Atheists Pray? n.d.). Christine Wicker (2013) posted in *Psychology Today* that perhaps the prayers of atheists are “cries for help from people who can’t help crying out even though they don’t think anyone hears. Trees falling in the forest. Or just screamers, who voice their pain because they must and give it meaning because that’s what humans do.”

Why do Christians pray? Wicker notes that people define prayer today differently from how it was once defined. This is likely true for believers and non-believers alike. “Prayer, like so much of American religious belief, has gone rogue. Now it can consist of all manner of things. Be directed toward all sorts of entities. Or none at all” (Wicker 2013).

Not only have physicians and epidemiologists taken an interest in studying prayer, so have social scientists. In the mid-1980s Margaret Poloma, a sociologist and professor at the University of Akron, undertook a preliminary study on prayer in the Akron, Ohio area. This study served as the basis for a more extensive national survey conducted by the Gallup Organization in cooperation with both the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion and the Religious Research Association. Considering that so many people pray, Poloma was interested in how and why they pray. The results of this research is reported in the book *Varieties of Prayer, a Survey Report* (1991). Poloma and Gallup found that Americans engage in four major categories of prayer: ritual prayer, conversational prayer, petitionary prayer, and meditative prayer. She reclassified these into two major types: meditative and verbal. Poloma and Gallup describe meditative prayer as less active than verbal prayer, “with the person relating to God in a passive, undemanding, open, and nonverbal way” (7). Although the word “meditative” raises red flags for some people, it is important to know how Poloma is using the word. In her survey she

used four statements to differentiate meditative prayer from other types of prayer. Meditative prayer involved (1) spending time quietly thinking about God, (2) spending time just “feeling” the presence of God, (3) spending time worshiping and adoring God, and (4) trying to listen to God speak (1991:26). Meditative prayer, as defined by these four statements, appeared to have the greatest benefits to the person praying. Poloma and Gallup found that individuals who employed meditative prayer were *more likely* to experience the presence of God during prayer than were those who employed more active verbal prayers (15, emphasis added).

In spite of the positive benefits of meditative prayer, Poloma found that meditative prayer is not the most common type of prayer among Americans. Ninety-five percent (95%) of Americans employ conversational prayer. They pray by talking with God about what is on their mind. Ritual prayer was the least popular type of prayer—particularly among evangelical Protestants. Only 19% of those who pray use ritual prayer and most of those who use it are older Catholics. She found that petitionary prayer was used by 42% of those who pray. She also found that petitionary prayer tends to be looked down on by the well-educated and those with a strongly scientific worldview. “It requires an image of a God who is willing and able to intervene in the daily affairs of humans” (32). Evangelical Christians use petitionary prayer more than other Christians do. Poloma found that those who employ “petitionary prayer tend to score higher on other forms of prayer and general religiosity than those who do not” (32).

Various surveys show that the frequency of prayer differs significantly by age, gender, race, education, and income. In general, older people pray more frequently than younger people, women pray more than men, non-whites pray more than whites, less educated people pray more than more educated people, and those with lower incomes pray more than those with greater incomes. A study using empirical data from the Baylor Religion Survey (2005) reported similar findings. Of the sociodemographic variables studied, they found income to be the most significant variable (Baker 2008:176). These researchers concluded that those who are more marginalized in American society pray more often. This supports Poloma’s conclusion that “need coupled with a viable faith seem to be strongly correlated” for those who employ petitionary prayer (Poloma and Gallup 1991:34).

An Ellis Research survey for Facts & Trends finds that the median amount of prayer time for pastors is 30 minutes per day. During that time, they found that a typical pastor spends 12 minutes with prayer requests, 8 in quiet time, 7 giving thanks, 7 more in praise, and 5 confessing sin. However, just 16% of pastors are very satisfied with their personal prayer lives, 47% are somewhat satisfied, 30% somewhat dissatisfied, and 7%

very dissatisfied (Ridgaway n.d.). It is interesting to note that this survey shows that pastors spend most of their time in prayer making prayer requests, what Poloma defines as petitionary prayer. This brings us to the question of whether or not God answers prayer and what is the impact of unanswered prayer on those who pray.

Does God Answer Prayer?

It was our custom to pray before traveling. Before my husband started our car in the early morning of July 27, 1990, we bowed our heads with our three young sons and asked for God's presence and protection with us that day. One might classify this as a type of ritual prayer because we always did this. In that sense, it was a type of ritual. Yet this does not necessarily mean that it was not meaningful. We had a very real sense of our need of God and his protection of us as we traveled. We were well aware that travel in Africa could be dangerous. In fact, we had prayed about whether or not we should take this trip months before we went. When we stopped for our picnic lunch at noon that day we thanked God for the safe and pleasant trip we had had thus far and for his protection and presence with us.

Several months later I got into the driver's seat of a car for the first time since the accident and invited my three little boys to pray with me before we started. The three of them bowed their heads then suddenly my middle son stopped me. "Mommy," he asked. "why are we praying?" His question was sincere. "We prayed last time and God didn't take care of us." His little eyes were looking directly into mine. From his six-year old perspective, he was trying to determine whether or not it was reasonable to expect that God would keep us safe. He wanted to know the purpose of our prayer that day.

When the young, healthy 23-year-old son of missionary parents became sick, of course the parents prayed. Christian parents do not need scientific evidence to support their belief that prayer aids the healing process. The Bible says that the prayer of faith will heal the sick (Jas 5:15). Many missionaries have experienced the power of God in their own lives and are able to identify periods in their lives when they know God was there. It is not uncommon for missionaries to have experienced times when they believed that God had miraculously intervened to protect them and preserve their lives. In the world in which we live today, missionaries can invite family and friends from around the world to pray for them when they need it.

Not everyone who prays believes that God answers prayer, however. Some do not believe that the purpose of prayer is to get God to do things

for us. Yet the Bible encourages believers to ask for what they need. A *Newsweek* poll entitled, "Is God Listening?" found that 87% of those who pray believe that God answers prayer *at least some of the time*. *Newsweek* found that 82% of those who pray are able to accept unanswered prayer without it challenging their faith while 13% reported that they had lost their faith at a time as a result of unanswered prayer (Woodward 1997). Although 99% of family physicians believe that religious beliefs can *aid* the healing process, they do not believe that prayer replaces medical care.

Tanya Luhrmann, a psychological anthropologist from Stanford University, studied the prayer practices of evangelical Christians in order to understand how they came to experience God as real in their lives. She has written a book entitled *When God Talks Back: Understanding the American Evangelical Relationship with God* (2012). The evangelical Christians that Luhrmann studied sought out and cultivated intimate and concrete experiences of God's realness. They prayed for specific things so that when God answered their prayers it was clear that he had answered, thereby strengthening their relationship with him. Luhrmann pointed out, however, that "prayer failure is an inevitable consequence of the way these churches encourage people to pray" (268). Along with specific answers to prayer, there were inevitably many unanswered prayers. This forced people to get something more out of prayer than just the "goods." When prayers were unanswered these Christians turned their focus from whatever was prayed for to their relationship with God. Luhrmann found that under these circumstances, "it is often when prayer requests fail that prayer practice becomes most satisfying" (268). She found this to be especially true when small, specific prayers were not answered.

In trying to understand the impact of unanswered prayer, Luhrmann notes that "God has always disappointed" (2012:267). She points out that the Bible is full of stories of God behaving in ways that his people do not understand. The life of Job is a classic example. She notes that God never gave Job an explanation of why things happened the way they did. "What humbles and satisfies Job is not new belief but felt experience: 'My ears had heard of you but now mine eyes have seen you'" (285).

One of the first books I read after my husband was killed was entitled *Disappointment with God* by Philip Yancey. In the book, Yancey tackles the question of why God does not behave the way we think he should. There is simply no answer for this question. Luhrmann said that the religion of the Christians she studied was not so much about explaining reality or explaining God, but transforming their own suffering in such a way that their relationship with God was even more real. "They care about transforming their own suffering, not about explaining why suffering persists. Their faith is practical, not philosophical" (2012:299).

Missionary Care from 1990 to Present

The momentum for caring for missionaries continued to grow in the 1990s. Mission administrators came to see missionary care more and more “as a strategic and ethical necessity for mission” (O’Donnell 2015:91). The field was becoming more professional with opportunities for learning and growth for those who wanted to be involved in supporting and caring for missionaries. Books and resources were being developed to inform and define the field.

It was not until the mid-1990s or later, however, that the impact of research on the relationship between spirituality and health began to be felt in mainstream clinical practice. “Spiritually oriented psychotherapy” emerged as a specialty area within the field of psychology in the second half of the 1990s. This occurred as research investigating the impact of religion on health was reported in “every major medical, psychiatric, psychological, and behavioral medicine journal” (Sperry and Shafranske 2005:11). By the late 1990s, spiritual issues were seen as legitimate therapeutic considerations. Secular psychologists were being asked to deal with spiritual issues in psychotherapy more and more. In 1996 Mark R. McMinn, PhD, of Wheaton College, published *Psychology, Theology, and Spirituality in Christian Counseling* in which he discussed various levels of integration of psychology, theology and spirituality into the counseling process.

The training I received in the early 1990s did not provide me with skills to integrate spiritual concepts into the psychotherapeutic process. Cathy Morgan, the wife of the director and founder of AFM, had taken an active role in learning as much as possible from the evangelical mission community related to the preparation and care of missionaries. At Cathy’s invitation, I attended the 14th Mental Health and Missions Conference in Angola, Indiana, in the fall of 1994 and have attended annually since then. I had the opportunity to learn from leaders in the field of missionary care like Dr. Esther Schubert, Dr. John Powell, and Dr. Rick Ascano, all of whom have served as mentors. At the same time I continued to work toward completion of a PhD in counseling psychology at Andrews University, which I completed in 1997.

At the beginning of the 21st century there was a change in missionary demographics. More and more missionaries were being sent from places other than North America, Europe, or Australia (Ng 2012:45). As a result missionary care became more international. According to O’Donnell, member care became “increasingly globalized into a multidisciplinary, culturally contextualized field” (2015:91). The Institute of World Mission and the General Conference recognized the need to provide training for

the many missionaries who were coming from places other than North America, Europe, or Australia. According to Pat Gustin, director of the Institute of World Mission between 1996 and 2005, "by the mid-1990s it became clear that missionary training needed to be expanded to include missionaries from all parts of the world. It was with this in mind that in 1998 the church's Annual Council voted to offer missionary training for the world field. The first "world institute" was held in Nairobi, Kenya, in April 1999. Matthew Bediako, who is Ghanaian, was the Secretary of the General Conference at that time. He understood clearly the need to both train and care for an international missionary work force. Elder Bediako also recognized the need to provide mental health care for these missionaries. His stated goal during his term as Secretary of the General Conference was to have a psychologist on staff in the secretariat of the General Conference.

In December 2003, the DePaiva family was murdered on the island of Palau. The DePaivas were from Brazil and were serving as missionaries in Palau. Pat Gustin was the director of the Institute of World Mission at that time. In many respects, this incident was a catalyst for bringing mental health care into the mission program of the church. Based on Gustin's recommendation, I was asked by the Institute of World Mission and the General Conference to go to Palau to help address the emotional needs of the community as well as the needs of the DePaiva family, particularly the needs of ten-year-old Melissa. Melissa was the only survivor of this tragic event, barely escaping with her own life. Because of my desire to integrate spiritual concepts into the psychotherapeutic process, I had enrolled in a doctor of ministry program in Formational Counseling at Ashland Theological Seminary just a few months prior to this. After my trip to Palau, I attended workshops to gain specific skills in the treatment of trauma. I attended workshops led by the nation's leading traumatologists and pursued board certification in the field of traumatology. I integrated the evidence-based research in traumatology into what I was learning about prayer. With the support of the administration of AFM I was able to test the effectiveness of the approach I was developing with AFM missionaries. I did this in the context of spiritual retreats for AFM missionaries held in various places in Asia, Eastern Europe, and Africa. In November 2005 I presented the work I was doing with missionaries at the Mental Health and Missions Conference in Angola, Indiana. The topic of my dissertation was "An Examination of Formational Prayer as a Theosomatic Approach to the Treatment of Trauma in Missionaries." I borrowed the term "theosomatic" from Jeff Levin who coined the term. I completed the Doctor of Ministry degree in 2007 and have continued to be a regular presenter at the Mental Health and Missions Conference.

The current decade has seen the global impact of member care in missions continue. Dr. G. T. Ng, from Singapore, is the current Secretary of the General Conference. Dr. Ng shares Elder Bediako's desire to provide training and support for all interdivision missionaries. Dr. Ng also has a desire to include mental health care as a part of the mission program of the church. Cheryl Doss, the current director of the Institute of World Mission, has taken a leading role in providing training and care on a global scale. The Institute currently does three mission institutes each year, two outside the United States and one at Andrews University. In 2011, based on Cheryl's initiative and invitation, I began attending every mission institute rather than just the ones held at Andrews.

The first Global Member Care Conference sponsored by the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) was held in Chiang Mai, Thailand, in April 2012. This first conference hosted 350 attendees from numerous countries and organizations. Ray Wahlen, Associate Treasurer of the General Conference and Co-Director of International Processing and Recruiting Services (IPRS), and I both attended. The second Global Member Care Conference was held in Antalya, Turkey, in February 2015. Ray Wahlen and I also attended that conference along with five other people from the General Conference, seven people from Middle East North Africa Union (MENA), as well as the Human Resource Director for Adventist Frontier Missions. More than 360 people were in attendance at that conference. Homer Trecartin, president of MENA, and I had the privilege of presenting at this conference. I have been working with Pastor Trecartin since 2012 doing a missionary care pilot project in MENA. Our presentation reflected this project. Pastor Trecartin presented the needs of the missionaries serving in Middle East and I presented the psycho-spiritual approach to missionary care and conflict resolution that I used with a group of missionaries serving in the Middle East in October 2014.

Missionaries, Prayer, and the Experience of God

I am not aware of specific studies done on the prayer experience of missionaries, however, a 2009 Gallup poll conducted in 114 different countries might give us a bit of insight into the prayer experience of missionaries. Gallup researched the per-capita income levels for each country and then explored the question of how important religion was in the life of those surveyed and made the correlations between the two. They found that that "the *higher* the per-capita income of a nation, the *lower* the role of religion in daily life, and vice versa" (Archer 2015:29). The one exception in this survey was the United States. Despite the affluence of the United States, a majority of Americans still report that religion is important or very important in their daily lives. As was reported earlier, however, even

in the United States income was found to be the most significant variable in the frequency of prayer (Baker 2008:177S).

In June 2008 the American Psychological Association commissioned a nationwide survey to examine the state of stress in the United States. This survey found that Americans were feeling increasing levels of stress with money and the economy at the top of the list for 8 out of 10 Americans. While Americans use a variety of coping mechanisms to deal with stress, some healthy and some not so healthy, 77% of those who used prayer as a coping mechanism considered it to be most effective in helping them manage their stress. Other studies support the view that people pray as a means of helping them cope with the stress of life and that it is more effective than other ways of coping with stress (Spilka 2013:18). The fact that missionaries typically live in situations that are considered stressful, positions them to turn to God and prayer as a means of coping.

Missionaries are often in situations where the demands placed on them are greater than the resources available to meet the needs. Most missionaries report this as having a positive impact on their relationship with God. Mission stories often include an answer to prayer, a miracle, or some sort of divine intervention. These stories and experiences nurture our souls and give us a sense that God is real and active in our world and in our lives. Many choose mission service because they want to experience the presence of Jesus in their own lives in a way that is often difficult in a more affluent context.

Christians have often allowed hardships and trials to draw them into greater intimacy with God. Recently I worked with a young couple that served as relief workers in a post-war country immediately after they married. By the time I met with them they had served in a number of countries that were considered hardship posts. Although they were serving in an impoverished, but peaceful, West African country at the time I met them, the husband wanted to return to an area where there was both greater need and greater danger. His reason was that the experience of God's presence was so much more real in the extreme circumstances in which they had spent most of their married lives. In working with missionaries, I have found that many experience the intimate presence of Jesus as a result of the challenging experiences they face.

Scott Shaum of Barnabas International provides pastoral care to missionaries who serve in difficult places around the world. Scott and I are both contributors to the book *Trauma and Resilience*, which is edited by Drs. Frauke and Charlie Schaffer. Scott shares the belief that suffering is a pathway to greater intimacy with God. He goes so far as to say that God permits and may even orchestrate various afflictions to bring us into greater intimacy with him (2012).

Daniel Goleman is the author of the two best-selling books, *Emotional Intelligence* (1995) and *Social Intelligence* (2006), as well as the author of two books on the practice of meditation, *The Varieties of Meditative Experiences* (1977) and *The Meditative Mind* (1988). Goleman reports that sacrifice, suffering, and privation are all believed to be avenues to opening one to the experience of God's presence. In fact, according to Goleman, this is one reason self-flagellation was practiced by some Christians during the middle ages. He notes that "Saint Augustine advocated a process of self-denial and the practice of virtue as preparation for an encounter or experience of God" (1988:57).

While numerous theologians throughout history have shared the perspective that suffering draws people into intimacy with God, psychologists of religion tell that for many people one of the goals of prayer is "to enter into a state where one 'encounters' God" (Spilka and Ladd 2013:13). In their book, *The Psychology of Prayer*, Bernard Spilka and Kevin L. Ladd indicate "that prayer is a major component of God's felt presence" (14). In his book, *Into the Depths of God*, Calvin Miller talks about the privilege people have of entering into the presence of the King of the Universe through prayer. He says that it is important that we remember who we are and who God is. "God is to be met and listened to, not sat down and talked to" (Miller 2000:53). The *New Living Translation* of Hebrews 4:16 says that we are to "come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most." Missionaries, like other Christians, want to learn to know and experience the presence of God in both good and bad times.

A Psycho-Spiritual Approach to Missionary Care

In developing a program to effectively support Seventh-day Adventist missionaries, the church has done well in the area of training. The area that Seventh-day Adventists appear to be behind other mission organizations is in the area of on-the-field spiritual and emotional support. Because of the way that the church is organized most missionaries have good logistical and practical support before going to the field, while on the field, and when they return to their homeland. Times of crisis have highlighted the need for more focused on-the-field emotional and spiritual support. In order to learn from what others were doing in the field of missionary care or member care the Institute of World Mission staff began attending the Mental Health and Missions Conference in Angola, Indiana, in November 1997, where they have had the opportunity of networking with mission educators, administrators, and mental health providers who work with missionaries.

In order to effectively address the spiritual and emotional needs of missionaries, particularly during times of crisis, it is helpful to examine the approaches that have been developed and used by others. John Weaver provides a history of three basic approaches that emerged over the past 50 to 60 years within evangelical Christianity: the Biblical Counseling Movement, the Inner Healing Movement, and the Integrationist Movement. The Biblical Counseling Movement was founded by Jay Adams. Adams saw secular psychology and psychiatry as inherently anti-biblical. He also questioned the very concept of mental illness along with the medical model of psychiatry. Adams believed that the mind is a distinct entity apart from the brain. He therefore reasoned that the mind could not be sick, only sinful. He believed that those who were labeled as mentally ill were, in actuality, people adapting poorly or inappropriately to the challenges of life. According to Adams, "the behaviors of the mentally ill were character flaws or moral shortcomings" (Weaver 2015:loc 2187). Unfortunately, this view has been rather widespread among many conservative Christians. Because of this view there has been a great deal of shame associated with mental health problems. Individuals are often hesitant to admit they are having problems or to seek help when they do. Adams saw the Bible as completely sufficient in regards to how to live in our modern world. He did not believe that science contributed to our understanding of human nature or personality. Adams chose the term Nouthetic to identify the counseling methodology he developed. According to Adams, Nouthetic Counseling is derived solely from the teachings of Scripture without the influence of secular psychology. Adams proposed a form of counseling known as nouthetic confrontation, whereby the counselor's goal was to confront sin in order to bring the behavior of the counselee in line with biblical principles. "Personal responsibility became a crucial, perhaps the crucial, issue defining the biblical counseling movement" (loc 2198). A number of Fundamentalists universities offer biblical counseling programs rather than counseling psychology programs.

The Biblical Counseling Movement came out of the post-enlightenment philosophy of Dutch and German Calvinist theology. It has a very strong focus on biblical truth. The Inner Healing Movement, on the other hand, came out of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity which adopts a pre-enlightenment worldview more similar to that of the Bible (loc 679). Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity embrace the reality of the spiritual world and operate with the assumption that a real conflict exists between God and Satan, much like what is reflected in the New Testament. Satan is seen as the arch enemy of God along with a host of demonic beings intent on evil. The Holy Spirit enables the Christian to combat the forces of evil in the name of Jesus and through the power of God. Pentecostals

and Charismatics believe that Christians have a responsibility to carry on the work of Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit. As a result, deliverance from evil spirits as well as physical and emotional healing play a significant role in Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity.

Agnes Sanford is considered the founder of the inner healing movement. Sanford was very much influenced by the work of Carl Jung and incorporated many of Jung's ideas into her work. Among those who learned from her were John and Paula Sandford, Francis MacNutt, Leanne Payne, and Charles Kraft, all considered "old stalwarts of inner healing" (Weaver 2015:loc 1557). The various forms of inner healing prayer that have emerged over the past 50 to 60 years are a product of the charismatic renewal movement of the 1960s and 1970s.

In the early 1990s Terry Wardle developed an inner healing model which he calls Formational Prayer. He defined Formational Prayer as a "ministry of the Holy Spirit, moving through a Christian caregiver, bringing the healing presence of Jesus Christ into the place of pain and brokenness within a wounded person" (2001:13). Formational Prayer, along with various inner healing approaches, all employ principles of psychology but serve as a means of inviting the Holy Spirit into the psychotherapeutic process.

Like the majority of mental health professionals who do missionary care, I take an integrationist approach. This is the position of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as it relates to healthcare in general and as is outlined in the Health Ministries Departmental Policies. Dr. Peter Landless, director of Health Ministries of the General Conference, states that the Seventh day Adventist Church promotes a philosophy of holistic health and healing. Landless points out that "the Adventist Health Message is founded on the Bible, informed by revelation through the inspired writings of Ellen G. White, and consonant with evidence-based, peer-reviewed science" (personal communication, February 23, 2015). This is the position of integrationism. Integrationism "seeks to combine the best of psychological and Christian approaches without sacrificing the truth in either area (see Collins "Moving Through the Jungle," 34)" (Weaver 2015:loc 4141). As was outlined in the section dealing with the history of missionary care, attempts to integrate psychology and religion began in the early to mid 1950s as groups of psychologists explored the relationship between the two and sought to provide effective mental health care for missionaries, ministers, other church workers, and lay people.

The most comprehensive overview of the integrationist perspective or Christian psychology's relationship with secular psychology was done by Stanton Jones and Richard Butman in their 1991 book *Modern Psychotherapies*. According to Jones and Butman, the Bible is "an essential foundation

for a Christian approach to psychotherapy” but is not “an all sufficient guide for the discipline of counseling” (1991:27). Integrationists believe that “discrepancies between the fields of Christian theology and psychology . . . were caused either by an inadequate understanding of psychology or a hermeneutical misunderstanding of scripture” (28). The integrationists approach is quite different from the Biblical Counseling approach in this regard and much more in line with the Health Ministries Department of the General Conference.

Implementing Research on Prayer into Missionary Care

In working with a missionary in crisis, I attempt to integrate the teachings of Scripture and the writings of Ellen White with the latest research on crisis intervention and the treatment of trauma. Bessell van der Kolk, PhD is considered by many to be the nation’s leading trauma expert. Van der Kolk says that traumatized people often feel alienated and disconnected from the world around them. Many even feel abandoned by God. They often fail to maintain a “personal sense of significance, competence, and inner worth” (1996:197). While hardships and suffering can draw people into greater intimacy with God, traumatized individuals often need help in maintaining a sense of connection to God. Severe trauma or devastating loss can sometimes lead even committed Christians to conclude that either God is not there or, if he is, that he does not care. Unless a person has experienced a severe trauma, it may be difficult to understand how the circumstances of life can sometimes block one’s view of God. Jesus himself felt abandoned by the Father as he was crucified and cried out “My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?” (Matt 27:46). Robert Sapolsky, professor of neurology at Stanford University says that while personality plays a huge role, the single best predictor of ability to deal well with stress is how socially connected one is (Nicholson 2010:). The goal in working with an individual who has undergone a severe trauma is to help maintain or restore their connection with their family, their social support system, and with God. Attachment or connection is a right brain function and needs to be brought about through activities that involve the right brain. Being physically present is far more effective in communicating caring than is verbal communication. Language is a left brain function. The presence of someone who represents the world church can be powerful to a missionary who has been traumatized and may be experiencing feelings of abandonment or betrayal by God. Prayers for such people should be ones that bring the individual before the throne of grace so they are able to experience the tender presence of Jesus in the present moment. According to Jeff Levin, a theosomatic approach to healing acknowledges the spiritual determinants of health based on a belief in the

power and willingness of God through the ministry of His Spirit to bring healing (Levin 2001:15). Herbert Benson wrote, "I am astonished that my scientific studies have so conclusively shown that our bodies are wired to believe, that our bodies are nourished and healed by prayer and other exercises of belief (1996:305). According to Finney and Malony, the types of prayer that facilitates this kind of experience employ "techniques of meditation as a means of relating to God in a non-demanding and non-defensive way" (1985:284). In the Psalms God invites people to "Be still, and know that I am God" (46:10). In the *Desire of Ages* Ellen White says,

It would be well to spend a thoughtful hour each day reviewing the life of Christ from the manger to Calvary. We should take it point by point and let the imagination vividly grasp each scene, especially the closing ones of His earthly life. By thus contemplating His teachings and sufferings and the infinite sacrifice made by Him for the redemption of the race, we may strengthen our faith, quicken our love, and become more deeply imbued with the spirit which sustained our Savior. (2001:83)

She also says on page 112 of *Testimonies for the Church* (vol. 5) that "those who will put on the whole armor of God and devote some time every day to meditation and prayer and to the study of the Scriptures will be *connected* with heaven" (emphasis added).

Van der Kolk suggests that finding meaning is central to healing (1996:19). As those who experience severe trauma contemplate on the final scenes of the life of Jesus, they are gradually able to begin to view their own experience in light of Christ's suffering. Tanya Luhrmann found that the Christians she studied were not so concerned about explaining their suffering or explaining God. They were concerned with transforming their suffering in such a way that their relationship with God was even more real. "Their faith is practical, not philosophical" (2012:299). Luhrmann also points out that the evangelical process of developing the heart shares a good deal with psychotherapy (101). In fact, she says that much of the faith practices of the evangelical Christians she studied resemble psychotherapy.

As indicated toward the beginning of this article, my desire to address both the spiritual and emotional needs of missionaries led me to begin a doctor of ministry program in Formational Counseling in 2003. The topic of my dissertation was "Formational Prayer as a Theosomatic Approach to the Treatment of Trauma in Missionaries." Formational Prayer served as the basis of my work with AFM missionaries serving in various countries as well as in the United States in 2004 and 2005. This work took the form of crisis intervention, conflict resolution, individual counseling,

team-building seminars, and spiritual retreats. As a part of evaluating the theoretical basis of Formational Prayer as a theosomatic model of care, I made a presentation at the 2005 Mental Health and Missions Conference in Angola, Indiana, in which I sought the opinion of other Christian mental health professionals who worked with missionaries. I measured the clinical effectiveness of the model qualitatively by the personal testimonies of the missionaries I used it with in addition to their responses to a questionnaire. In order to evaluate the biblical and theological basis of the model I invited the following people to conduct a critical evaluation of my study: Clyde Morgan, CEO and founder of Adventist Frontier Missions, Tim Holbrook, AFM field supervisor, Russell Staples, Roy and Connie Gane, Gordon and Cheryl Doss, and Jane Thayer, all of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews. In addition, I obtained critical feedback from John Powell, co-founder of the Mental Health and Missions Conference and Mike Porter, president of the Middle East Union 2002-2006 and CEO of the Quiet Hour 2006-2012. In addition, Jerry Thayer and Bruce Bauer from Andrews University served on my dissertation committee at Ashland.

This type of careful evaluation of any new prayer approach is important. Spilka and Ladd point out that “it is difficult, if not impossible, to name any behavior in which humans engage that—when taken to an extreme or under some specific set of circumstances—does not also have the potential for negative as well as positive outcomes. Prayer is certainly no exception, and investigations that explore the full range of possibilities are crucial” (2013:21). The various inner healing models that have been developed are all a blend of Christian theology and secular psychology. In the foreword to Terry Wardle’s book *Healing Care Healing Prayer*, Charles Kraft says that “although we must admit that some have ‘gone off the tracks’ in their practice of inner healing, it is possible to work in this area in a balanced way, listening to both Scriptures and to the Holy Spirit while employing the insights God has led professional psychologists to discover” (Wardle 2001:10). The results of my study indicate that Formational Prayer is a biblically, theologically, and clinically sound theosomatic model of care that can be used within a Seventh-day Adventist context. Having established the clinical as well as the biblical basis of Formational Prayer it meets the criteria of an integrationist approach. It “combines the best of psychological and Christian approaches without sacrificing the truth in either area” (Weaver 2015:loc 4141).

Conclusion

Thirty hours after leaving South Bend, I arrived on the campus where the 23-year-old son of a missionary couple had died of an unexplainable

illness. I arrived in the evening so I was able to get some rest before I met with the parents the following morning. Their grief was intense. Although they had the funeral the evening before, they were still in a state of shock and struggling to cope with the reality of what had happened. Fellow missionaries rallied to support them. Still, no one anticipated that the young man would die. He was young and healthy and actively involved in ministry. Every one that I talked to told me about his smile. People described him as friendly and caring toward everyone. He had learned the local language quicker than any of the other missionaries and was actively involved in ministry. He and a small team of volunteers had gone to another island to help establish a health clinic and to minister to the local people. Both of his parents were seminary professors. Naturally when he got sick he returned to their home. At first it seemed like he had the flu. They tried to care for him as best they could but his condition deteriorated quickly. He was admitted to the hospital. The doctors were not able to identify the cause of his illness. Of course the parents prayed. The whole campus prayed. Family and friends from around the world prayed. It all happened so quickly and he was gone.

Often in the face of horrendous and sudden loss, it is difficult to remain rational. We believe in a God who is capable of healing the sick and raising the dead. We believe in a God of miracles. Nothing makes sense and we begin to bargain. God could still raise the dead. There are many unanswered questions. Just this week I met a young missionary who said that she first heard my story when she was a little girl living in a small village in the interior of what was then the country of Zaire. Her uncle was a student at the school where my husband and I were serving in Rwanda. After our accident her uncle sent a message back to his village asking the church to pray and fast for my youngest son and myself because it was not certain that we would survive. She said she prayed but she also wondered what kind of God would let something like this happen to a missionary who was serving Him. Tears streamed down her cheeks as she told me how glad she was to see the woman she had prayed for so many years ago and to see how God had provided for me in spite of what happened. In many respects missionaries, in fact all those who bear the name of Jesus, are like biblical characters. Onlookers determine what they can expect from God by how they see God working in the lives of his servants. The whole campus was grieving the loss of this young man, and what his death symbolized. They felt vulnerable. The cause of death was still unknown. What could they expect from God if their children got sick?

In addition to meeting with the parents, I spent my time meeting with faculty and students and helping them process what had happened. Often, in fact usually, there are no answers. Healing comes only as we

recognize that pain and suffering are doorways used by God to enter our lives and to draw us to Himself. While we serve a God of miracles we also serve a crucified and risen Savior who told us that in this world we would have tribulation (John 16:33). Meaning is found as we allow our suffering to be transformed in light of the suffering of Jesus and the cross He bore. In providing care to a grieving and suffering individual not only should the insights from research be used but the care should be, as Terry Wardle described, “a ministry of the Holy Spirit, moving through a Christian caregiver, bringing the healing presence of Jesus Christ into the place of pain and brokenness” (2001:13). In time, we will be able to “consider it pure joy whenever we face trials of many kinds, because we know that the testing of our faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that we may be mature and complete, not lacking anything” (paraphrase of Jas 1:2).

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BRUCE L. BAUER

Intercessory Prayer and Mission

In the history of Christian mission there are many gripping stories of a direct relationship between intercessory prayer and the safety and success of God's people in mission. This brief article looks at biblical examples of intercessory prayer, biblical narratives of intercession, and examples from mission history to emphasize the importance of mission personnel recruiting and being supported by intercessors in their mission.

Definitions

The *Webster's New World Dictionary*, 3rd college edition, says that intercede is from two Latin root words, *inter*, indicating "between" and *cedere*, meaning, "to go." To intercede is "to plead or make request in behalf of another or others." An intercessor is one who prays or pleads for others, asking God to intervene in a situation or in a person's life in a particular way.

An intercessor is a person who by calling or by nature chooses to be a mediator on behalf of those who cannot intervene for themselves. Intercessors make requests, urge, plead, beg, counsel, discuss, risk, sacrifice, and make war on issues relating to the weaker ones, and thus they have an impact on the final outcomes for those they serve. (Warner n.d.)

Ezekiel 22:30 expresses the concept of intercession very well. It says, "I looked for someone who might rebuild the wall of righteousness that guards the land. I searched for someone to stand in the gap in the wall so I wouldn't have to destroy the land, but I found no one" (NLT).

What does it mean to stand in the gap? In the cultural setting where these words were written walled cities were the norm. Protection from one's enemies came from massive walls and guarded gates. Whenever walls were broken down or gaps remained in the defenses danger

increased. Strong and skilled warriors were assigned to stand in the gap to defend the city from attack and to fight off those trying to destroy the people. These strong warriors were actually, by their presence and activity, building a hedge of protection around the city.

The text suggests that God is looking for someone, for spiritual people, to stand in the gap, to fight on behalf of others, to build up a hedge of protection around the weak and defenseless, to seek the destruction of the strongholds of the evil one, to set people free from fear and bondage. Standing in the gap through intercessory prayer is as much a part of mission and ministry as is giving and going.

There are many examples of leaders in the Bible interceding and pleading for God to intervene in situations, to help avert calamities or threats against the nation of Israel, to request God to reveal himself to people, or to protect the name and honor of God. Notice the following examples.

Three Intercessory Prayers

Daniel's Prayer for His People and the Restoration of Jerusalem

It was the first year of the reign of Darius the Mede, the son of Ahasuerus, who became king of the Babylonians. During the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, learned from reading the word of the Lord, as revealed to Jeremiah the prophet, that Jerusalem must lie desolate for seventy years. So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and fasting. I also wore rough burlap and sprinkled myself with ashes. (Dan 9:1–3)

O my God, lean down and listen to me. Open your eyes and see our despair. See how your city—the city that bears your name—lies in ruins. We make this plea, not because we deserve help, but because of your mercy.

O Lord, hear. O Lord, forgive. O Lord, listen and act! For your own sake, do not delay, O my God, for your people and your city bear your name. (vv. 17–19)

Paul's Prayer for the Colossians

So we have not stopped praying for you since we first heard about you. We ask God to give you complete knowledge of his will and to give you spiritual wisdom and understanding. Then the way you live will always honor and please the Lord, and your lives will produce every kind of good fruit. All the while, you will grow as you learn to know God better and better.

We also pray that you will be strengthened with all his glorious power so you will have all the endurance and patience you need. May you be filled with Joy, always thanking the Father. He has enabled

you to share in the inheritance that belongs to his people, who live in the light. For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his dear Son, who purchased our freedom and forgave our sins. (Col 1:9–14)

Joshua's Prayer for Israel after the Defeat at Ai

Joshua and the elders of Israel tore their clothing in dismay, threw dust on their heads, and bowed face down to the ground before the Ark of the Lord until evening. Then Joshua cried out, "Oh, Sovereign Lord, why did you bring us across the Jordan River if you are going to let the Amonites kill us? If only we had been content to stay on the other side! Lord, what can I say now that Israel has fled from its enemies? For when the Canaanites and all the other people living in the land hear about it, then will surround us and wipe our name off the face of the earth. And then what will happen to the honor of your great name?" (Josh 7:6–9)

These three examples of intercessory prayer should offer hope that an intercessor's prayers will also result in God working on behalf of those engaged in mission and ministry today. The next section looks at biblical narratives that reinforce the idea that intercession is a vital part of mission.

Biblical Narratives of Intercession

Exodus 32 records the story of Moses on Mt. Sinai. Moses is away from the camp so long that the people talk Aaron into making a golden calf as a representative of the God who brought them out of Egypt. "Then the Lord said, 'I have seen how stubborn and rebellious these people are. Now leave me alone so my fierce anger can blaze against them, and I will destroy them. Then I will make you, Moses, into a great nation'" (vv. 9, 10). It is instructive to notice Moses' response:

But Moses tried to pacify the Lord his God. "O Lord!" he said. "Why are you so angry with your own people whom you brought from the land of Egypt with such power and such a strong hand? Why let the Egyptians say, 'Their God rescued them with the evil intention of slaughtering them in the mountains and wiping them from the face of the earth'? Turn away from your fierce anger. Change your mind about this terrible disaster you have threatened against your people! Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. You bound yourself with an oath to them, saying, 'I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars of heaven. And I will give them this land that I have promised to your descendants, and they will possess it forever.'"

So the Lord changed his mind about the terrible disaster he had threatened to bring on his people. (vv. 11–14)

Moses pleads with God to change his mind, to remember his promises, to not do to the people what they deserved. As a result of Moses' intercession, God spared the people. Is it possible that intercessory prayer could not only move God to refrain from destroying those deserving of destruction, but also that intercessory prayer could bring about the conversion of those in contemporary societies hell-bent on destroying Christians?

Another narrative in Genesis 18 tells the story of the Lord's visit to the camp where Abraham was living. The Lord tells Abraham, "I have heard a great outcry from Sodom and Gomorrah, because their sin is so flagrant. I am going down to see if their actions are as wicked as I have heard. If not, I want to know" (vv. 20, 21). Abraham begins to intercede for the people in the two cities. He asks God to spare the cities if there are 50 righteous people, for surely God would not treat the righteous and wicked in the same way. Abraham continues to plead for the people, reducing the number from 50 to 45, to 40, to 30, to 20, and finally to 10. "And the Lord replied, 'Then I will not destroy it for the sake of the ten'" (v. 32b).

In this situation, Abraham pleads for a wicked city that God would spare the city if even 10 righteous people were found there. This again emphasizes the importance of God's people pleading for mercy and for a delay in judgment.

Some may ask why intercession is so important. After all, God knows everything, so why should he wait to get involved until his people ask or invite him to be active in a situation. Surely God is going to do what he wants to do whether or not his people are faithful in intercession. In answer to that line of reasoning I would like to share my favorite biblical narrative on intercession as found in Exodus 17. This is the account of the battle of Rephidim in which Joshua defeated Amalek. Joshua was the general that led Israel into battle, but the Bible takes us behind the scenes and gives us insight as to the importance of intercessory prayer.

Moses and Joshua developed a strategy for Joshua to lead the troops into battle while Moses would stand on a nearby hill to intercede for the troops and to hold out the staff of God. I do not know how long you can hold out your hands with them weighed down by a wooden staff. It is also possible that Moses, who had been trained in Egypt to lead troops into battle became preoccupied with the twists and turns of battle. Regardless, Moses soon found that as long as his hands were raised in prayer that Joshua was winning, but when his hands tired and he stopped praying, the tide of battle turned and the Amalekites began to chase the Israelites from the field. It did not take Moses long to realize that the most important thing he could do that day was to pray with outstretched hands. Aaron and Hur pushed some stones together for Moses to sit on while they held up Moses' hands. "As a result, Joshua overwhelmed the army of Amalek

in battle.” (Exod 17:13). Joshua and his troops were victorious, but the person most responsible for the victory that day was the intercessor, Moses.

This is a simple story that illustrates a great spiritual principle that is vital for mission today. Joshua fights while Moses prays. Joshua is listed as the victorious general, but the Bible reveals that it was God’s power released through intercessory prayer that was the deciding factor. Joshua was too busy during that day fighting the Amalekites to spend extended time in prayer, yet the battle was ultimately won by prayer—the prayers of the intercessor, Moses.

What does this say to us about our ministries and our mission to unreached or unchurched people? The lesson of this Bible story says to me that our church schools, our pathfinder clubs, our Bible classes, our missions to unreached peoples would be much more effective if those who were doing the actual ministry would be teamed with intercessors who would be faithful in praying for those entering the battle. Mission and ministry is a spiritual endeavor and as such must be surrounded and supported by faithful prayer. Reaching out to people in the world religions and in the secular and postmodern world is a spiritual work. It is not just a program or a plan or a strategy; rather, it is a spiritual battle against the strongholds of evil, a commitment to reach out to lost and hurting people who need to hear the good news.

If you were the enemy, what would you do to cause problems? Get those involved in leading God’s work to neglect prayer? Get them too busy to pray? Help them to rush off to work each morning with no Bible reading, no prayer time? Then when they come home at night get them interested in TV, sports, eating out, or working in the yard—anything to keep them from spending time interceding for the lost.

The three biblical narratives above suggest that intercession speaks to God’s heart to encourage him to extend mercy and delay judgement. They also inform God’s people that in addition to gifted doers, committed praying people are also important to the outcome of mission. In the next section this connection between intercession and successful mission is illustrated in several stories from mission history.

Examples from Mission History

William Carey

William Carey has correctly been called the “father of modern mission.” He was born in England in 1761 and lived until 1834. His work in India was marked with hardship, tragedy, pain, and countless obstacles. He buried a wife and son in India and never returned to England. In total he spent 40 years working to share the gospel with the Indian people.

His accomplishments are staggering. He was an evangelist who worked tirelessly to stamp out the cultural practices of *suttee* (in which a widow was burned alive with the body of her husband) and infanticide. He was an educator who established Serampore College and who was involved in agricultural research. However, his skills as a linguist sets Cary apart from most missionaries. During his lifetime in India he translated and printed six complete Bibles, developed translations for an additional 24 New Testaments, and 10 additional portions of scriptures in the various Indian languages (Pierson 2009:203, 204).

But William Carey didn't do all of these things through his own power. While he labored in the distant land of India, back in England, William Carey had a sister whom he affectionately called Polly — Polly was bedridden and almost completely paralyzed for 52 years. William wrote to Polly all about the details of his struggle to create primers and dictionaries in the various Indian dialects, as well as the difficulty of figuring out how to get those books typed and printed. And with every letter from William that she received, Polly lifted these needs up before the Throne. Every day for 52 years, she faithfully prayed for her brother. (Tada 2011)

Very few people know about William Carey's praying sister. I believe that much of his success in India was dependent on his bed-ridden sister's prayers back in England. This story should be an encouragement to those who are too old, too sick, or too scared to go as missionaries, for it should help them realize that they can still have an incredible impact of what God is doing on the other side of the world. Intercession is an enabling power for mission.

Young Missionary with the China Inland Mission

Another story is told of a young missionary from the China Inland Mission who was convicted that he should take the gospel to a very neglected region of China's interior where there were no Christians. The reason why this area was neglected was that it was known for its ruthless bandits who attacked and often killed outsiders who ventured into their territory. In spite of the obvious danger the young missionary still felt God's call to go evangelize the people in that area of China. So, against the advice of his colleagues, he set out.

He went, he preached, he shared the good news and wonder of wonders he never even saw a bandit and never felt threatened. When He returned from his trip his fellow missionaries were amazed as he shared about his trip and the fact that he had never been in danger.

Soon a rumor began to circulate throughout the province, apparently started by the bandits themselves. According to the rumor, the young

missionary had escaped attack because he was the only foreigner who had visited that region with his own entourage of soldiers. The rumor even mentioned the exact number of soldiers guarding him—precisely eleven.

The missionary and his friends were stunned for he had done all his travel alone. They realized that God must have sent angels to protect him in his work, but why eleven? The answer to that question came several weeks later after he had written a letter to his home church in England reporting on his trip and the rumor circulating about his armed guards.

His pastor wrote to inquire as to the exact date of the trip into the bandit-infested region. After writing again to give his home church those details he received another letter from the pastor saying how just a few days before the young missionary had started out on his dangerous trip the pastor had called his church members to join him at the church for an evening of special prayer for this particular missionary. The pastor had been terribly disappointed at the poor attendance. He wrote that, including himself, there were exactly eleven people praying for him that evening (Eastman and Hayford 1988:13, 14).

Japan

I also had an experience towards the end of my work in Japan that demonstrated the effectiveness and importance of intercessory prayer. I had held a month-long evangelistic series in Osaka that resulted in 28 decisions to follow Jesus. The whole series had attempted to present enough information for the Japanese to understand who Jesus was, why he was important in the salvation process, and why it was important for them to make a commitment to him.

Immediately after the series Elder Kamoda, the pastor of the Osaka Center Church, studied with the group each Sunday and I studied with them each Wednesday evening. But we also did something new for this group of baby Christians. We typed up a list of their names and asked the church members and the student missionaries to pray for them on a daily basis. The results were much different than we had ever experienced in many previous series of meetings.

Over the next two and a half years all 28 of the people on that list were baptized. I attribute those results to two factors: the many intercessory prayers offered in their behalf as they faced challenges in being able to receive Sabbath off from work or school and in other areas of their lives, and the fact that we kept the group together, picnicked together, went on outings together, as well as studied the Bible together.

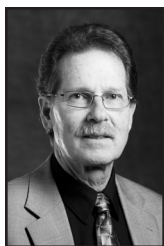
I believe that these stories from Scripture and from mission history confirm the fact that intercessory prayer makes a difference. Joshua would have lost his battle that day if it had not been for the prayers of Moses. The

young missionary would have most likely lost his life if it had not been for eleven faithful praying people back in his home church. William Carey would never have accomplished all that he did were it not for his praying sister. And the ministries you will be involved in and the work for unreached and the unchurched peoples will be of much less worth without your prayers and mine.

In a nutshell my philosophy of prayer goes something like this: I believe that this world has been captured by the evil one. I believe that because the battle between Christ and Satan is not yet finished that God's power and interaction in human affairs is often limited to those circumstances where through the petitions and prayers of God's people God is invited to intervene in the affairs of this world. I believe that God desires to be much more active in our lives, but we receive little because we ask for little. I strongly believe that our intercessory prayers invite and then permit God to do much more than he can do if we do not pray.

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BOUBAKAR SANOU

Prayer as a Strategic Weapon in Mission

Introduction

Ephesians 6:10–17 is a strong reminder that success in mission cannot be achieved by human efforts and stratagems only but by the power of God through prayer:

¹⁰Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ¹²For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. ¹³Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. ¹⁴Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, ¹⁵and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. ¹⁶In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Unfortunately John Robb remarks that

for today's hyperactive missions leaders, apart from opening and closing meetings, saying grace at the table or as a special consolation in time of emergency or stress, prayer is most often treated as a harmless pastime rather than a strategic weapon. In our attitude we often relegate it to the likes of doting old ladies who have nothing better to do with the autumn time of life. Certainly for most missions leaders, prayer does not seem to be where the action is, otherwise wouldn't we be giving it far more attention in our busy lives? (1991:23)

It is regrettable that we can be so busy for God that we often have no time for him. When it comes to mission or ministry, Oswald Chambers reminds us that “the lasting value of our public service for God is measured by the depth of the intimacy of our private times of fellowship and oneness with Him. . . . Beware of anything that competes with your loyalty to Jesus Christ. The greatest competitor of true devotion to Jesus is the service we do for Him” (n.d.: January 6, January 18).

Although there are several reasons why prayer should be considered the key ingredient in mission and ministry, only four reasons will be explored in this short article: (1) God is the prime mover of mission and ministry, (2) mission is a spiritual endeavor and as such, our weapons ought to be spiritual not primarily carnal and intellectual, (3) the exemplary prayer life of Jesus demonstrates the vital importance of prayer in mission and ministry, and (4) the reliance of the Early Church on the power of the Holy Spirit to break down barriers for the propagation of the gospel.

God, the Prime Mover in Mission and Ministry

Craig Ott, Stephen J. Strauss, and Timothy C. Tennent in *Encountering Theology of Mission: Biblical Foundations, Historical Developments, and Contemporary Issues* emphatically state that mission has its root in the divine initiative and character (2010:61). In tune with these authors, David Bosch also points out that “mission is not primarily an activity of the church, but an attribute of God” (1991:390) because “it is not the church that has a mission of salvation to fulfill in the world; it is the mission of the Son and the Spirit through the Father that includes the church” (Moltmann 1977:64). As the originator of mission (Gen 3), “God often works both beyond and despite of the church to accomplish his redemptive plans” (Tennent 2010:58). On that basis, the specific and varied ways in which the church is privileged to participate in God’s mission “should never be conceptualized apart from the *missio dei*” (59). As a human agency in God’s mission, the Church must come to the full realization that the mission of God is participated in by prayerful and Spirit-led believers. In mission and ministry, prayer is not one of the options to explore for success. Prayer (asking God to show us what he expects of us as we join him in his mission) is the key ingredient for success. This being the case, one of the primary tasks of the Church and its leaders is to actively seek to discern and respond to the initiative of the Spirit who is guiding and empowering God’s redemptive mission. This is the pattern displayed in the ministry of the biblical prophets and apostles.

Rightly understood therefore, mission is primarily God’s prerogative. It is about God and his redemptive purposes and initiatives in the world,

totally apart from any actions, tasks, strategies, and initiative undertaken by the Church. In other words, “mission is far more about God and who He is than about us and what we do” (Tennent 2010:55). It is therefore essential to always consult God through prayer before anything is undertaken for him. Instead of spending countless hours in planning for mission and then asking God to bless our plans, we should fervently pray for God’s wisdom to see mission as he sees it and for open-mindedness to undertake mission as God would have even if that is contrary to our quest for orthodoxy. In mission, prayer should not be mainly about getting more people to accept Jesus Christ as their Savior but also about us being willing to do things God’s ways instead of ours. We need to heed the following admonition:

On their own, people achieve goals by their efficiency and ingenuity. With God on His mission, you must follow Kingdom principles to accomplish Kingdom purposes. Our ways may seem good to us. We may succeed in moderate achievements. When we try to do the work of God in our own ways, however, we will never see the mighty power of God in what we do, and the world will not see God revealing Himself to them. It is only by God’s power that people come to know and worship God. When God accomplishes His purposes in His way through us, people will come to know God. They will recognize that what has happened can only be explained by God. He will receive the Glory! (Blackaby and Willis 2009:76)

Mission and ministry belong to God. We therefore need to be dependent on God. Like King Jehoshaphat did, let us always turn to God saying, “We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you” (2 Chr 20:12). If we are sincere, he will reveal his will to us. Maybe God’s way will not be conventional to us just as Jehoshaphat was instructed to send his army to war with singing. But one thing is sure: Doing mission and ministry God’s way and with God’s power will accomplish his purposes.

Mission and Ministry as a Spiritual Endeavor

The second reason why prayer is an essential ingredient to success in mission and ministry is that mission is warfare. The Bible describes our world as including Satan and other demonic beings. Spiritual warfare is a reality that Jesus did not ignore in his ministry. He did not see Satan and demonic forces as myths and superstition. He saw these forces as real enemies from which people needed to be set free (Wagner 1996:119–136). Ellen White also asserts that no one “can doubt that satanic agencies are at work among men with increasing activity to distract and corrupt the

mind, and defile and destroy the body” (1909:143). The Bible therefore uses warfare terminology to describe our participation in the redemptive mission of God in the world. In Ephesians 6 Paul tells us that our engagement in mission is an engagement against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. He uses an imagery of an armor-clad Roman soldier to describe our battle with these evil spiritual forces, warning that we absolutely need divine power to demolish their strongholds.

The Bible also makes a connection between the prayers of God’s people and the occurrence of breakthroughs in the accomplishment of God’s purposes in the world. At the onset of the Exodus, it was the power of God through prayer that allowed Moses to be victorious over Pharaoh’s resistance to let the Israelites leave Egypt (Exod 3–17). It was the power of prayer that brought down the strongholds of Baal in the lives of the Israelites in 1 Kings 18. It was the power of prayer that saved Peter from early martyrdom (Acts 12:1–18). It is urgent also in our time that we transfer our dependence on human-made strategies to appeals to God through importunate prayer for the power of the Holy Spirit. It is also only what will give true success to our participation in God’s mission.

Jesus, the Example in Prayer for Mission and Ministry

Jesus left a lasting impact on his disciples through his life of constant prayer. It was his habit to commit his everyday ministry to his Father before engaging in it (Mark 1:35). Prayer was his weapon in ministry and mission. Ellen White beautifully depicts Jesus’ prayer life as follows:

No other life was ever so crowded with labor and responsibility as was that of Jesus; yet how often He was found in prayer! How constant was His communion with God! Again and again in the history of His earthly life are found records such as these: “Rising up a great while before day, He went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed. . . . In a life wholly devoted to the good of others, the Saviour found it necessary to withdraw from the thoroughfares of travel and from the throng that followed Him day after day. He must turn aside from a life of ceaseless activity and contact with human needs, to seek retirement and unbroken communion with His Father. As one with us, a sharer in our needs and weaknesses, He was wholly dependent upon God, and in the secret place of prayer He sought divine strength, that He might go forth braced for duty and trial. In a world of sin Jesus endured struggles and torture of soul. In communion with God He could unburden the sorrows that were crushing Him. Here He found comfort and joy. (1940:362)

Jesus did not reduce his time in prayer because he had more to do. His

busy schedule was the reason why he prayed more. To successfully connect humanity with God through mission and ministry, we cannot afford to ignore Jesus' example.

The Early Church's Reliance on the Holy Spirit through Prayer

Several Bible texts point out the complete reliance of the Early Church on the power of prayer and the guidance of the Holy Spirit for success in mission and ministry. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and his subsequent manifestations (Acts 10) resulted in an unprecedented missional structure in the Early Church. In Cornelius' house, Peter embarked on a long theological discourse covering many fundamental beliefs. But the Holy Spirit cut him short as if to tell him that God does not depend on our human preconceived means in his relentless work to reach those who desire to know him. While Cornelius needed Peter and his gospel to know the way to salvation, Peter and the Early Church needed Cornelius and his household's salvation experience to come to term with their preconceived view as to how God was supposed to carry out his mission.

A new chapter in Christian history was thus written in Cornelius' house and the Early Church understood that they were to make significant adjustments. Under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, the Jewish Christians who previously had no regards for the Gentiles learned to welcome them into full fellowship as co-heirs of the kingdom of God. The Jerusalem Council concluded with: "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and us..." meaning that through prayer and many deliberations, the apostles understood the will of God through the promptings of the Holy Spirit. They made way to the Holy Spirit and sided with what was good to him. Another example of the Early Church's submission to the will of the Holy Spirit is found in Acts 16:6-10. In this incidence Paul and his companions had to abandon their plans of preaching the gospel in the province of Asia in favor of the Holy Spirit wanting them to deliver the good news of salvation in Macedonia. They no doubt knew and obeyed the Holy Spirit because it was the Holy Spirit who led the process of their selection for mission. While the believers at Antioch were fasting and praying, the Holy Spirit asked them to "set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them" (Acts 13:2).

The 21st century church needs, more than anything else, to be receptive to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. This may mean making unapologetic room for new, creative, and even unorthodox missionary methods because the God of mission and ministry is unpredictable. As the church continues to offer earnest prayers for the outpouring of the latter rain, are we willing to make some unprecedented adjustments on how we have

been accustomed to understand ecclesiology and mission structures? Asking God to lead us in his mission means that we should be open to change rather than always favoring the status quo (Paulien, 2011).

Conclusion

Because God is the Lord of mission, the Church is only a servant in mission. As such, the Church needs to always be reminded that the servant does not tell the Master what kind of assignment he/she needs nor does he/she have the free will to come up with his/her own assignment. The servant only waits on his/her Master for the assignment and the instructions to carry it out (Blackaby and Willis 2009:77). For Christians, there ought to be only one mission, and that is the mission of God (*missio Dei*). Mission is the initiative of the Triune God, rather than that of his Church. *Missiones ecclesiae* (what the Church does) is only its privileged participation in the *missio Dei*. In the light of *missio Dei*, the Church's mission should be continually renewed and reconceived (Bosch 1991:519). There is no better way to renew and reconceive our mission and ministry than through earnest prayer.

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JOHN HOLBROOK

Prayer: Breaking Down Walls of Hostility

“Get out of our village!” Orange light from a small fire danced across the features of the Tawbuid elder. Every twitch of his hand, every glance of his eyes betrayed a fierce determination to keep me away from his people. Around him sat his council and the rest of the village, all intent on the same purpose.

“Yes,” another wizened old man rasped. “The elder told you to leave our village, and you will obey him. But I’ll take it a step further and tell you that the entire Tawbuid tribe doesn’t want you here, especially the highlanders that you are so persistent on living with. Get out, and leave the Tawbuid people to themselves.”

Eight years earlier I had first heard of the Tawbuid people, a remote unreached tribe on the island of Mindoro in the Philippines. When I tried to visit them, however, I ran into a brick wall. The tribe had set up an elaborate system to keep all outsiders out. For the next eight years, I visited Mindoro every summer, trying to break through the wall of hostility, but to no avail. Finally, in 2011 I arrived as a missionary with Adventist Frontier Missions (AFM) to formally begin working with the Tawbuid. Even after four long months of trying every plan I could imagine, the Tawbuid steadfastly refused to have anything to do with me. In fact, it was an honor that this border village even condescended to hold a meeting to formally forbid me from working with them. Most Tawbuid would not even look at me, let alone speak to me.

I had arrived in the Philippines full of fire and great ideas gleaned from AFM’s first-rate training program. I was certain (with God’s help of course) that I would be able to blaze into the center of the tribe, strike to the heart, and revolutionize their life by leading them to Christ. I knew that it would be hard, I grew up in the mission field, but I expected that my experience and new ideas would make the work easier. Now, four months later, I was still beating my head against the same brick wall. My

last card had been played, my last plan tried. There was nothing more that I could do. Nothing more, that is, except to pray.

It is not that I had not been praying before. I had prayed for eight long years that God would open the Tawbuid people to the gospel. However, I finally began to realize that my prayers for God to work had been mingled with my own ideas of how to reach the people. I knew intellectually that I could do nothing without God. Now I was beginning to understand at the heart level that without God, absolutely nothing useful would happen. My prayers for God to bring down the walls of hostility surrounding the Tawbuid were changing me.

In *Christ's Object Lessons*, Mrs. White says, "Prayer is not to work any change in God; it is to bring us into harmony with God" (1900:143). How often have I felt that if only I prayed in the right way, or for long enough, then God would answer my prayer? Thinking about prayer in this way is actually similar to animistic approaches to religion where the supplicant tries to manipulate God to do what is desired. When we as God's people think that doing something will influence God to answer our prayers, we are Seventh-day Adventist animists.

God knew all along how to break down the walls the Tawbuid had set up. Rather than God changing the Tawbuid in response to my prayers, though, he was waiting for me to change. I have found this to be a pattern in the hostility that I have met nearly daily in my work with the Tawbuid. Whenever I pray about hostility that is directed toward me directly, God works by changing me. And when I allow him to change me, the hostility evaporates. In this case, it was only a couple of weeks after this meeting and after I had come to know in my heart that I could not do anything unless God acted, that he answered my prayers and threw the doors wide open for me to move into the Tawbuid village of Balangabong.

I also discovered the hostility I met while working with the Tawbuid was not always directed towards me. Rather it came from hardened, lost people who were trying to stop God's work as a whole. I observed that in these situations God tends to work silently and invisibly to break down the walls.

The believers that I am working with now in the village of Balangabong are just starting to work to lead other Tawbuid people to Christ. The non-denominational evangelicals along the border of the tribe have also been quite active in trying to reach the unreached majority in the highlands, and between our two groups of witnesses we are starting to make waves.

Just last month, the entire tribe gathered together and summoned us to answer for our actions. The tribe has been trying to stop missionaries from evangelizing them for quite some time, but it appeared that they had every intention of sealing the decision at that meeting. They brought

with them representatives from the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples, who are tasked with enforcing the native population's wishes by Philippine law.

I came to the meeting having no idea what to say in order to dispel the anger of the tribe or to keep the doors open for evangelism. Though I had been racking my brain for several days, I could find no solution. Over and over, though, I have seen God mysteriously turn such situations on their head. I sat calmly and prayed, trusting God to allow work to continue among the tribe if it was his will, while elder after tribal elder stood and slandered our Christian witness, claiming that we forced people to become Christians, did not respect the wishes of the elders, and frightened people.

Then it was my turn to speak. I stood up, still having no idea what to say. Jesus promised, though, in Luke 12:11, 12, "Now when they bring you to the synagogues and magistrates and authorities, do not worry about how or what you should answer, or what you should say. For the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say" (NKJV). God was faithful to his word. As I began to speak words came to me.

"Friends," I said. "I grew up just north of you with the Alangan tribe. When I was young I heard of how hard your lives are because of the fear and utter terror which rules your people. I loved you, even then, because of God who loves all of us. When I was old enough I came to try to help you. I followed every command that your elders gave me. They are here today, and can bear witness to the truth of what I say. I never have and never will force anyone to become a Christian, because God's law is love, and love is no longer love when it forces itself on someone else. I did not come to frighten people. I came because I have the only antidote to fear, and I want to freely offer it to every Tawbuid who will receive it."

The elders sat in silence. I knew that there was nothing special in my words, but they had been given to me by the Spirit in the very moment that I needed them, so I trusted the Spirit to work. Suddenly a wiry old man jumped to his feet. "Look, we really don't have enough time today to figure all this out. Why don't we all just go home and think about what we've heard, and we can talk about it again another time."

Heads nodded in assent, and the meeting began to break up. The very elders who moments before had been intent on pressing the issue to the point of legal action against us now simply wandered away. I smiled with contentment and praised God in my heart. None of them knew what had really happened. God had powerfully demonstrated once again that when hostility is shown toward God's work and lost people back God's cause into a corner, God works in mysterious ways to break down the walls of hostility.

Sometimes, though, the hostility is found in the heart of someone who is almost a believer, or who is still young in the Christian faith. Rather than showing open hostility, this type of wall is usually in the person's heart which keeps him or her from fully committing to God. It is in these situations that I have also observed God working earth-shattering miracles.

One Sabbath after church I sat chatting with Pablito, one of our church elders on the AFM project where I grew up. Pablito was also trained as a medical worker, and he asked me, "What does it mean when the red in the thermometer goes all the way to the top?"

"Well," I replied. "I guess it means that the person has a really high fever."

"Oh, ok" Pablito said, and then started to leave.

"Hey! Wait a minute!" I said. "What happened? You can't just leave me hanging! What's the story?"

"Well," he said. "It happened like this. You know that Bunsoanan became an Adventist when she was a young girl. She was still a baby Christian when her father forced her to marry a man from deep in the mountains. He dragged her with him back to his village in the interior, and over the years she forgot about God and drifted back to the old ways.

"Just a couple of months ago, Bunsoanan and her family moved back to our village. Not long after, her oldest son, Rison, became very sick. I treated him, and he began to recover, but you know how jungle folk have a hard time remembering to give medicines at the right times. Bunsoanan began missing doses, and Rison started to get sick again.

"One day, Rison coughed and coughed until a foamy substance came up from his lungs, filling his nose and mouth. Within minutes he was dead. Bunsoanan was desperate. Somehow in her grief, she remembered the God of her childhood, and seeing a little girl running by the house she yelled for her to go get the church elders.

"Well the little girl didn't know what had happened, so she took her time walking the half mile or so to where Aning, the other elder, and I were plowing. We are called for medical situations all the time, and most are not serious, so we took our time finishing up plowing and then tied up our water buffalo in a nice shady spot. About an hour later we finally showed up at Bunsoanan's house.

"Please!" Bunsoanan cried, tears running down her cheeks. 'Please help Rison, he died!'

"I looked at Aning, and Aning looked at me. 'The missionaries never taught us anything about praying for dead people,' Aning said. 'What should we do?'

"Yes, that's true.' I answered. 'On the other hand Jesus raised people from the dead, and his followers did too, when they prayed in the name of

Jesus. You know that Bunsoanan remembers God, but she hasn't followed Him in a long time. Maybe we should pray for Rison as a witness to her?"

"And so that's what we did. We figured that if God was going to bring Rison back to life again he would need to breathe, so first we cleaned out his mouth and nose. Then Aning and I knelt down and put our hands on Rison's head.

"Father," Aning prayed. 'We know that you have the power to bring Rison back to life again. If you choose not to, we still know that you are the true God. But we ask that you would give him his life again as a witness to Bunsoanan and her husband that you are the true God, and that they should worship you. Thank you for hearing and answering. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.'

"When we opened our eyes, Rison opened his too! God brought him back to life again as a witness to Bunsoanan!"

These are just a couple of the ways that I have seen God work to break down walls of hostility in my own mission work. Through the years, I have seen these patterns repeated over and over. When I pray about hostility that is directed toward me, God responds by changing me, and at which point the hostility usually evaporates. On the other hand, when the hostility comes from hardened unbelievers trying to stop God's work, God answers my prayers by working silently and mysteriously to remove the walls. I have also noticed that God usually works his earth-shattering miracles in response to someone praying for walls to be broken down in the hearts of almost-believers, or young Christians.

Whatever way God chooses to work, prayer seems to be a vital part of the equation for breaking down walls of hostility that keeps people from hearing and responding to a Gospel presentation.

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SUSAN PAYNE

The Role of Prayer in Ministries Dependent upon Donations

He had just made a social *faux pas* that could mean the end of his vision and even his life. He became dreadfully afraid. Months of fasting and praying had preceded this day. How could God let it end this way? Quickly he reassured the donor of his non-threatening intentions and then he prayed. What happened next was an outlining of a detailed plan for the restoration of Jerusalem. In the end, the donor-king granted Nehemiah's request, but Nehemiah realized that the king's benevolence was "according to the good hand of my God upon me" (Neh 2:8).

The first two chapters of Nehemiah are crammed full of inspiration for a ministry dependent upon donations. However, the two most important concepts are that God is the source of everything and that prayer is necessary in aligning a ministry with God's goals. Nehemiah was shaken when he received reports of his people back in Judah. He "sat down and wept, and mourned for many days" (Neh 1:4 NKJV). He then poured his heart out to God in a prayer that contained the elements of praise, confession of his people's sins, claiming the promise of God's faithfulness, and a request. The request was to find mercy in the sight of the King. Four months passed before the opportunity came.

Being the king's cupbearer carried heavy responsibilities. Making sure that the king's drink was not poisoned also allowed Nehemiah access to the king. So when Nehemiah, for the first time ever, appeared sad before the king, Artaxerxes called out his strange behavior. Immediately, Nehemiah realized the seriousness of the situation and became "dreadfully afraid." The words came out of his mouth, "May the King live forever!" He then went on to explain his sorrow of heart. "What do you request?" the king asked. Then Nehemiah prayed.

Nehemiah knew that God would need to grant him mercy in the king's eyes if the king was to grant his request. Carefully, Nehemiah listed the concise details of his carefully crafted plan which included a time line,

goals, and provisions to rebuild Jerusalem, his own personal needs, and permission to travel. When the king granted his request, Nehemiah gave God the glory. God used Nehemiah to rebuild the walls by creating a desire in him to accomplish that task, by giving him a plan, and by granting him mercy in the eyes of the donor-king. And prayer was the key that unlocked this calling for Nehemiah.

Ellen White tells us that “prayer is the key in the hand of faith to unlock heaven’s storehouse where are treasured the boundless resources of omnipotence” (1892:94, 95). Boundless resources indeed! “The earth is the Lord’s, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein” (Ps 24:1). The land, the silver, the gold are all God’s (Lev 25:23, Hag 2:8). God is the source for everything that a ministry needs.

A word to describe when a person has learned the lesson that God is the source of everything is “dependence.” The founder of Adventist Frontier Missions (AFM), Clyde Morgan, related several experiences in which God taught him the lessons of dependence on God. These lessons were communicated through the avenue of prayer. Early on the Morgan family was dependent on a donor to send supplemental income to where they were working in Saipan. Usually the monthly assistance came on time. Sometimes it would be delayed for a couple of weeks, but occasionally by a month! Without sufficient funds, Clyde wrestled over the idea of writing a letter to the donor (without mentioning the money) as an attempt to jog their memory. But each time after seeking the Lord’s will in prayer, Clyde distinctly heard God say, “No, I don’t want you to do that.” During this time of waiting, Matt 6:25-34 became very dear to Clyde as he learned to “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added to you” (Matt 6:33). On one occasion God said, “If you need more money, I can take care of that. But if you need less, I can do that too.” This was the first real testing ground for building Clyde’s faith, but it was not the last.

Another growing time came as Clyde and Cathy were finishing seminary and debating whether or not to work for AFM full-time. Various people were counseling different things: go back into pastoral ministry and grow AFM on the side, or get a part-time job to support your family and work to build AFM, but Clyde heard God distinctly say, “I want you fulltime from the start.” With a December graduation looming close, Clyde was concerned that AFM was only getting very small donations, and only had \$30 to \$40 cash on hand. There was no way to support a family on that amount of money. After graduation Clyde took many walks, praying for clarity and direction. He remembers devoting his life to reaching the unreached but struggling with the money aspect. Over and over he had the impression that God wanted him fulltime in the ministry from the

beginning, but how? Finally, Clyde and Cathy asked for a sign. "Lord, give us the first month's rent for our home and we'll take that as a sign to go forward." Later that day, Clyde called back to Berrien Springs. The person receiving the mail for AFM reported that \$275 had come in! Shortly after, another \$350 arrived. This was so unusual, that they knew these donations were an act of God, a direct answer to prayer. Five days later they received a \$1,000 gift, and AFM's dependence on God for funding was in full swing.

AFM's first missionaries, Marc and Aunie Scalzi, had a miraculous funding story. One morning Clyde got an early morning call from the west coast. At 4:30 a.m., a donor called to say that she couldn't sleep all night because God wanted her to support the Scalzis so they could go!

This story is characteristic of God's dealing with AFM missionaries in the form of answered prayer where they clearly see the hand of God moving on someone to support them. These acts of God confirm his call for them to go as cross-cultural missionaries to reach the unreached.

One missionary, John Baxter, relates this story of not only being the one helped, but also of being a part of God's confirmation for another couple.

Prior to training we received \$500 towards launching our project. Beth and I were thrilled with this generosity, especially since the donors would soon be going to the mission field. While at training another family joined us, but they had not made the decision to go as missionaries or not. On the last day of training, they affirmed that they would go and serve on the frontiers.

Their decision to go, and the generosity of the other missionary family towards Beth and me caused me to think. I would like to give this newly decided family \$500 of our personal money as a means of encouraging them. Now \$500 represented a significant amount of our savings and rather than ask my wife directly, I prayed for God to ask my wife to have us give them the money. The next morning the first thing that Beth said to me was not, "Good morning," or "I love you," but rather "You know, the family who went through training with us and just decided to become missionaries, I think we should give them \$500." I was stunned and thrilled to see God confirm that we should do this for our friends.

I set off to tell them what God had done. Before I got a chance to share this news with them, the father of the family who had given the donation to our launching goal informed me that their family had been praying and they wanted to give us another \$1,000! I was flabbergasted, thanked them profusely, and then promptly forgot my original errand and returned to share the news of this kindness with my wife.

Later that evening, I sought to catch up with the family with whom

we intended to share our offering, when the other folks cut me off. These people had already given us \$1,500, would be leaving soon for the mission field, and they informed me that they felt impressed to give us another \$1,000! Again, I was overwhelmed with gratitude. I urged them to make sure that this was not merely their feelings and that God was leading in this decision, but of course, we would be thankful to receive their gift. By this time the other family had left without knowing that we were going to give an offering of \$500 to their project.

The next morning Beth and I met the newly accepted couple at the AFM office. I pulled them aside and told them how I had prayed that if God wanted us to give them the \$500, then He would have to impress Beth to share without any prompting from me. They, too, marveled at God's goodness in answering our prayers on their behalf. We shared a check for \$500 with them, they thanked us very graciously, and the husband said, "Thank you so very much! God is going to bless you ten-fold for this kindness."

When I returned to the couch where Beth waited, the secretary for AFM came up to us rather excitedly with an envelope in her hand. She held out the envelope and said that we needed to see what was in it. We opened the envelope and inside we found a check for \$5,000! God had indeed blessed us ten-fold, and more! (Baxter 2015)

Who but God could multiply one gift of \$500 into \$8,000! What an amazing God we serve!

Another missionary candidate raising funds shares this story about how God clearly defines the role that God was to have in the funding process.

When we began fundraising we felt very confident that we had many friends and family who would undoubtedly want to support this mission. Upon returning home we started calling them right away to tell how God had called us and to ask for their support. To our surprise the first ten people we called said they did not want to support, and one woman even said she didn't believe us. Confused and shocked we sat down to pray. Realizing that we felt very confident in our own strength, we asked for forgiveness and prayed that God would be the one to raise the funding for His mission.

The next Sabbath we broke the news to our home church, how God had called us back to foreign missions. When church was over, a man approached us saying he would like to support us and wanted to talk with us at his home. As we met with him he said, "Earlier this week I realized I am too old to serve in the mission field so I prayed that God would send someone I could support, and there you were." He gave us a one-time gift and also signed up to be our second monthly donor.

A few weeks after that, we gave our first presentation on the

mission which was also at our home church. After it was over a man came up to me and said, "You don't know who I am because I don't attend church here. My wife and I woke up this morning and felt impressed by the Holy Spirit to visit this church today but we weren't sure why. After we learned there would be a presentation this afternoon on missions, we remembered praying earlier in the week that God would send us missionaries to support." God had answered our prayers, making it clear that it was His mission and He would be the one to raise the support. (Coal 2015)

Even after leaning dependently on God, missionary candidates still have a work to do. They perform their part and allow God the freedom to show his power. The lessons learned in being dependent upon God through support raising are then easily transferred to other aspects in their cross-cultural ministry.

One of the early Protestant missionaries to China, James O. Fraser (1886-1938), discovered the power of prayer for his work. "I am feeling more and more that it is, after all, just the prayers of God's people that call down blessing upon the work, whether they are directly engaged in it or not. . . . Solid missionary work is done on our knees." (Crossman 1994:35, 36).

I have found in my work as the Development Director at AFM that as donors engage in the financial support of missionaries, they become personally invested in the work and their prayers multiply what God can accomplish.

Let us never forget that the greatest thing we can do for God or for man is to pray. For we can accomplish far more by our prayers than by our work. Prayer is omnipotent: it can do anything that God can do! When we pray God works. All fruitfulness in service is the outcome of prayer, of the worker's prayers, or of those who are holding up holy hands on his behalf. (Unknown Christian 1986:18)

Not that our prayers change God's intentions to further his kingdom. Instead, prayer allows God to do things that he would not do unless asked. "The fact remains that, when we pray for others, somehow or other it opens the way for God to influence those we pray for. God needs our prayers, or He would not beg us to pray" (1986:103).

We are to be "instant in prayer," to "continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving." Romans 12:12; Colossians 4:2. Peter exhorts believers to be "sober, and watch unto prayer." 1 Peter 4:7. Paul directs, "In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." Philippians 4:6. "But ye, beloved," says Jude, "praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in

the love of God.” Jude 20, 21. Unceasing prayer is the unbroken union of the soul with God, so that life from God flows into our life; and from our life, purity and holiness flow back to God. (White 1892:97, 98).

More than anything else it is God’s desire that his people keep themselves in the love of God! This is the true purpose of prayer—to communicate with God as a friend—but to also allow him to do his work in our lives is even more essential. In this way, we choose to open ourselves and our ministries to his work.

We are coming to a loving Father to Whom we owe all, and Whom we love with all our heart, and to Whom we may come repeatedly. In cashing our checks at the bank of heaven we desire chiefly His honor and His glory. We wish to do only that which is pleasing in His sight. (Unknown Christian 1986:65, 66).

Prayer allows us to align ourselves with what is pleasing in God’s sight. And this is true on a personal level as well as on an organizational level. When we are aligned with God, he supplies whatever is necessary for his call. In fact, “as the will of man co-operates with the will of God, it becomes omnipotent. Whatever is to be done at His command may be accomplished in His strength. All His biddings are enablings” (White 1990:331).

Years ago my husband and I asked for an application form to be missionaries with AFM. When I learned that I would have to raise funds, I promptly shut the door to applying. Years later God orchestrated events so that I became the director of development at AFM, in charge of the very thing I feared! Talk about irony. I came to AFM kicking and screaming. But as I surrendered to God, he revealed a ministry much deeper than anything I could have envisioned.

Before speaking on the phone or meeting with a donor, I try to pray for God’s timing and guidance in how to best minister to the person. This has led to many situations that I would describe as stranger than fiction. In other words no one but God could create the circumstances in which his care could shine forth. Once I made an impromptu visit to an elderly donor because I was never able to reach her by phone. It was a frigid, sub-zero day. When I arrived at her house, I discovered she had fallen outside and was crawling into the house! As I picked up her phone to call for help, I discovered her phone had been disconnected and she did not know it! Another time, I called and a donor had just lost their spouse. She begged for me to talk and pray with her as the funeral home prepared to remove the body of her husband.

I have learned that when I find myself in an awkward spot, I can stop

and pray like Nehemiah. God does amazing things in those moments. He longs to minister to his children and provide for them, and occasionally I have the privilege of being there when it happens. Praying is a two-way communication. Many times we do all the talking, but if we listen, God will orchestrate our days. I make many mistakes along the way. I have personally learned that “just as a plant may die for lack of watering, so may a genuine work of God die and rot for lack of prayer” (Crossman 1994:167). But when I hear God speak and obey, nothing is sweeter than knowing I am exactly where I am supposed to be.

Somehow, when one is in harmony with God’s will, he provides the things necessary for ministry. And the only way to be in God’s will is to spend enough time with him to know him intimately. All the praise goes to him as the source of all good things. “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning” (Jas 1:17). As you depend on God, remember that “my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Phil 4:19).

When it comes to the role of prayer in a ministry like AFM that is dependent on donations, align yourself with God through prayer and he will take care of the donations.

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JACQUES YVES N. MBENDE

Healing as an Approach for Discipleship in the Bible: A Missiological Perspective

This article is written because of an experience I had on the school campus where I serve. At that time, I was the school chaplain and among the students that enrolled in 2011 was one who a few weeks after school started told me about her health condition. Since childhood, she had suffered because of a heart malformation that was coupled with severe asthma. I tried to reason with her and convince her that the school environment would probably not be good for her health situation. She told me her parents had insisted on her coming to our campus for two reasons. First, medical efforts had been fruitless in improving her situation, and second, her parents said that since the university was a Christian school that therefore prayer would sustain their daughter. And, that is exactly what happened. During the year we had regular occasions to pray with her. Semesters after semesters her medical crisis became less intense and more and more rare. During her years at the school she also took Bible studies and eventually was baptized a few months before her graduation. Reflecting on that experience with her, I was struck with an idea: Is it possible that healing could provide an approach to discipleship?

This article attempts to do the following: (1), to define healing and discipleship, (2), to look at an instance of healing in connection with discipleship in the Old Testament (OT), (3), to present healing as an approach for discipleship in the New Testament (NT) Church, and (4), to briefly introduce what Ellen White says concerning healing as an approach to discipleship.

Working Definitions of Healing and Discipleship

What is healing and how does the Bible present it? How is discipleship defined? The following will help in serving as definitions and at the same time will be used as a basis for understanding my reasons for the suggestions given at the end of the study.

The word *healing* is not commonly used in Scripture and unfortunately the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary* (1979) does not provide a definition for the word healing. It instead refers to gifts of healing and refers the reader to see “Spiritual Gifts.” When looking at the definitions and comments provided for Spiritual Gifts nothing is said about healing. It is also interesting that explanatory notes are given for all the other gifts except for the gift of healing. Other sources offer good descriptions of the concept of healing.

In ordinary usage today it (healing) is applied to the non-medical treatment of disease, often spoken of as faith, divine or spiritual healing. This usage is based on a fragmented view of the human person in which the doctor looks after the body and the church looks after the soul. If we adopt the scriptural view of a person as a whole being, then healing includes the whole person and all means of healing, whether medical or nonmedical, physical or spiritual. All healing is of God whether provided through creation, providence or redemption. (*New Dictionary of Theology* 2000, s.v. “healing”)

Biblical healing in this study is a healing that is inclusive of the medical treatment provided in hospitals and healing as a result of prayer that calls for God’s intervention.

In discussing the question of discipleship, I am not dealing with a person’s salvation for it seems that only God is best placed to conclude whether or not a person is saved. From a biblical perspective, most people would agree that discipleship is the act of being what Jesus meant by disciple (*Nelson’s New Christian Dictionary* 2001, s.v. “disciple”).

Until one is able to distinguish the various usages of the term disciple, it is difficult to comprehend what is involved in discipleship. Dwight Pentecost suggests that the word disciple means a learner, a pupil, a scholar, one who comes to be taught. The idea of teaching and learning is preeminent in the word disciple (1996:10). The Bible also gives evidence that it is possible to approach the Word (Jesus) simply by having one’s intellect stirred, by listening to some new thing without any relationship to the truth or without any impact of that truth on one’s life as illustrated by the hundreds of curious people who used to listen to the preaching and teaching of Jesus without any intention of becoming his disciple.

One becomes a disciple in the biblical sense only when one is totally and completely committed to the person of Jesus Christ and His word. Apart from that commitment to Him and His word, one has no right to call himself a disciple of Jesus Christ. (Pentecost 1996:10)

To put it bluntly, discipleship involves commitment. It involves

identification with Christ in his shameful death. It is a matter of renunciation of oneself; it is about setting aside one's own aims, goals, ambitions, and desires in life. It involves sacrifice for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ. It implies setting aside one's own will and one's own rights and acknowledging that Jesus Christ has the right to be obeyed, the right to rule (see Matt 8:18–22; Luke 10; John 14:15; 15:14). Russell Burrill argues that the word disciple does not suggest a rapid conversion to the person discipling, but a slow process by which one is made a disciple (1998:16). Therefore, I view discipleship as a lifelong experience.

Healing and Discipleship in OT

This section will look at the story of Naaman and how because of his healing he became a convert and worshiper of the God of Israel (2 Kgs 5:1–19). In reference to the Lord of the Hebrews, the psalmist says, “He shall deliver the needy when he cries, the poor also, and he who has no helper” (Ps 72:12). Internal evidence from the account in the second book of Kings shows how the healing occurred. Naaman had to go and dip himself seven times in the Jordan River. In connection with what Isaiah wrote about “the sons of the stranger who join themselves to the Lord” (Isa 56:6), many commentators include Naaman among those sons of the stranger. For instance, Krummacher declares that the name Naaman signifies well-formed, beautiful . . . and that he was a heathen, born and educated in all the idolatrous blindness of his people (2005:170). Notwithstanding, he had been faithful to his convictions of right, and had felt his great need of help. Ellen White concludes that Naaman was in a condition to receive the gifts of God's grace. She explains that he was not only cleansed from his leprosy, but blessed with knowledge of the true God (1898:239). It is also important to note the detail of Naaman being faithful to what he knew, because obedience is crucial in matters of discipleship. After his healing, Naaman returns to the prophet's home and makes an interesting request that Krummacher considers to be “a confession, an irrevocable renunciation of the service of idols, an eternal and joyous renunciation of the kingdom of darkness . . . and the first token of homage and devotion which he presents on the altar of Jehovah (2005:181).

Moreover, in 2 Kgs 5:17 Naaman speaks of himself as Elisha's servant and requests from him two mules' burden of earth. According to Krummacher, it is for the purpose of worship. He explains that Naaman desires to have a few sacks-full of Israelitish earth, material earth, but to which he attaches a kind of spiritual importance. He designs, that immediately upon his return home, every vestige of his former delusion shall be abolished and effaced. No idolatrous image, no heathenish symbol shall be tolerated in his house, but an altar to the living God shall be erected there, that to

everyone it may testify of the great blessing which had been conferred upon him (Krummacher 2005:204). Ultimately, as a new convert, Naaman will henceforth be a worshiper of the true God of Israel and will be his follower. Those are vital elements for being a disciple.

Healing and Discipleship in the NT Church

Acts 9:10–18 presents the story of Ananias who prayed for God to heal Paul's eyes. After a life that involved the persecution of the believers in Jesus, Paul's life takes a dramatic about face and he now becomes Christ's disciple and serves him. Therefore, one of the functions of the gift of healings seems to be to offer people an opportunity to follow Jesus and serve him. Acts 9:36–42 describes another instance where Peter raises Dorcas from death and gives her the opportunity to continue her service on behalf of the needy. Hence, one can conclude that a second function of healing is to open the door to continued service for those who are already a disciple of the Lord. Acts 3:1–8 and 9:32–35 tell of two cripples, one in the temple in Jerusalem and the other in the city of Lydda. Both of them are healed by Peter. They both witness about the Lord and give glory to God. Thus, a third function of the gift of healing suggests that when healings are performed in the name of Jesus that the healed person gives witness and as a result many people turn to the Lord.

These passages suggest that after the time of Jesus, the NT Church continued with its healing mission. The narratives that mention healings appear to have been used by the Holy Spirit to affirm the disciples' message in the eyes of Gentiles and for the edification of the newly formed Christian Church. Therefore, the function of healing in discipleship was to give glory to the risen Lord, to encourage the person who was healed and other pre-believers to follow and serve God, and to strengthen people in their walk with Jesus.

Another interesting feature of many of the biblical narratives was that there was always a human intermediary involved in the healings who prayed, spoke, or commanded. Therefore, it is possible to view this human contribution as an instrument God uses or as a healing channel for God's work in the world. It is also interesting that many of the people who were healed grew in a discipleship relationship with God.

Ellen White on Healing as an Approach to Discipleship

There is a clear indication that Ellen White envisaged a close relation between healing and strengthening one's desire to become a disciple. Looking at the approach of the physician Luke, she notes the following:

In his work as a physician he ministered to the sick, and then prayed for the healing power of God to rest upon the afflicted ones. Thus the way was opened for the gospel message. Luke's success as a physician gained for him many opportunities for preaching Christ among the heathen. (White 1905:141)

White's statement points out the "healing power of God" and the way (emphasis mine) that is "opened for the gospel message." This gives insight to at least two points: on one hand, God can heal any sick person; on the other hand, such healing can be an opening for the gospel message. Thus, I argue that the idea of healing as an approach to discipleship is present in Ellen White's writings.

White also implies that it is the divine plan that one should work as the disciples worked. Physical healing is bound up with the gospel commission. In the work of the gospel, teaching and healing are never to be separated (White 1905:141). A similar idea is also contained in her book, *Medical Ministry*, where she specifically encourages physicians to combine healing with presentations of the gospel.

Our physicians need a deeper insight into the evangelistic work that God expects them to do. Let them remember that if they do not work for the healing of the soul as well as for the healing of the body, they are not following the example of the great Medical Missionary. (White 1932:41)

She also urges doctors to study the Word of God diligently, that they may be familiar with its promises and may be able, in tenderness and love, to point sinners to the Great Healer. Through these kinds of statements Ellen White confirms that healing can be used as an approach to discipleship.

Three Suggestions for the Future of Mission

The fact that the Bible and Ellen White presents healing as an approach that can be used to introduce people to the Lordship of Jesus Christ has several basic implications for the spreading of the gospel in both entered and unentered areas of our world.

1. Since there are different ways through which people hear and accept the gospel, the church should continue to promote healing as a means for evangelism. Adventists have used prophecy, media, family, archeology, health, and literature as methods to present biblical truth. However, there are those in society that will only be reached with God's love if they experience God's healing touch.

2. An atmosphere of healing should be developed and encouraged in each church so that members will not feel the need to visit Pentecostal or

charismatic churches in order to receive prayer for their physical illnesses. Healing is still part of God's plan and can reinforce the concept of a loving, caring heavenly Father.

3. Since Adventist health care institutions are already involved in ministering healing to people it seems it would be worthwhile to systematically follow-up former patients to continue to share a wholistic message of truth and healing with them.

Conclusion

This article affirmed that the various instances of healing in the Bible are not placed in the Bible only for the sake of telling the story of each healing event. A close look at numerous healing occurrences reveals how the healed person subsequently either became a follower or worshiper of the true God of Israel or was encouraged to become a disciple of Jesus Christ. Based on the Word of God affirming that Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb 13:8), I believe the same God who healed in the past still desires to do it today. Moreover, I stand on the opinion that since healing has served as a tool for discipleship in the past, the same can occur in our contemporary world. Contemporary mission should never get rid of methods that have been fruitful in the past, especially when the First Missionary is still in charge.

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A Brief Overview of *al Jinn* within Islamic Cosmology and Religiosity

Introduction

For centuries humans have been fascinated and have had a deep attraction for the supernatural, the unknown and the unseen. Whether it is with living creatures from other planets (i.e., visitors to this planet, chance meetings with the extra-terrestrial beings, sightings of unidentified flying objects) or something as seemingly simple as speaking with psychics, reading one's horoscope, or seeking someone to communicate with the dead. For some there is an unspoken fascination and/or longing for a deeper connection or insight into the cosmological plane within the spirit world. For others, spirits are no more than the souls of dead people, or ghosts, and even some pretend that spirits do not even exist. However, those who believe in a higher power know that spirits are either the forces of good or evil; both battling against each other to gain influence over humanity. Islamic religious beliefs tend to explain a realm of the unknown and unseen within cosmology. It is from this realm that Islam explains the world of *al jinn* and its connections to Islam.

The *Encyclopedia of the Qur'an* defines cosmology as a "divinely governed order of the universe and the place of humans within it" (Neuwirth 2001:441). This Qur'anic understanding of cosmology is taught within five very diverse sectors. These sectors are: (1) the divine six-day-work of creation of the material world, (2) human kind and its habitat in nature, (3) demons or spirits (*jinn*), (4) the animal world, and (5) the resolution of created space on the day of doom (judgment). In this article, I will focus on sector three that deals with demons or spirits, more commonly known in the Islamic world as *al jinn*.

When the average person hears the term *jinn* (genie), one often has a vision of a genie living inside a beautiful vase or bottle with a luxurious plush couch and living area inside of it. Or perhaps even the story of

Aladdin comes to mind. Nevertheless, these things come to mind because for centuries of folklore stories that were used to teach about the jinn. However, as time went on, the stories changed, thus providing a distortion of the events surrounding jinn. Or perhaps with a more Western perspective it has become rather fictionalized. From researching and gathering data from ancient, mid-evil, and modern/contemporary Islamic history, this article will explain who and what the jinn are and show how they function in traditional and/or contemporary Islamic cosmology and religiosity. This will be done by providing a brief overview of the origin of jinn to discover who and what they are, how they were created, how and where they live. Then a brief explanation of the differences between humanity and jinn will be explored, which will lead into learning about the powers of the jinn and the roles of both the good and evil jinn within Islam.

The Origin of Jinn

It is said that the jinn were on earth before human civilization began. In fact, in Islam it is believed that the jinn were the first creatures created. The jinn are said to have been created long before Pre-Islamic Arabia (prior to the rise of Islam in 630 CE). "Because the jinn are deemed to be closer to heaven than Earth, they are called *jinn*, deriving their name from the word in Arabic for heaven: *Jannah*" (Lawrence 2007:185). Asad¹ teaches the meaning of jinn from the Qur'an to be:

In the usage of the Qur'an, which is certainly different from the usage of primitive folklore, the term jinn have several distinct meanings. The most commonly encountered is that of spiritual forces or beings which, precisely because they have no corporeal existence, are beyond the perception of our corporeal senses: a connotation which includes 'satans' and 'satanic forces' as well as 'angels' and 'angelic forces', since all of them are "concealed from our senses". In order to make it quite evident that these invisible manifestations are not of corporeal nature, the Qur'an states parabolically that the jinn were created out of 'the fire of scorching winds', or out of 'a confusing flame of fire', or simply 'out of fire'. (Asad 2008:1135)²

Because jinn were created from fire, this great difference created a boundary between humans and jinn, thus making the jinn feel superior to human. This superiority complex created a great defiance, forever changing the world of Islam.

The Great Defiance

As aforementioned, the Qur'an teaches that jinn pre-existed human

beings. But since the jinn were not doing as *Allah* (God) intended, he removed the evil jinn from earth and then proceeded to create the Garden of Eden and then the traditional Christian creation story was derived. However, the angels saw one jinn in particular, which was an orphan and took pity on him and decided to bring him up to heaven to reside with them. This orphan jinn's name is *Iblis*, commonly known as Satan. According to the Qur'an, Satan was never actually an angel, but rather, a jinn. Angels are made from light and jinn are made from fire.

As the story continues, Allah finished creating the Garden of Eden and made Adam and Eve. Allah then designated that Adam would reign over all things on earth. Allah commanded that all of the angels and *Iblis* were to prostrate themselves before Adam. "They all prostrated themselves, save *Iblis*, who refused and gloried in his arrogance: and thus he became one of those who deny the truth" (Q-Asad 2:34).³ *Iblis'* defiance of Allah's order inadvertently resulted in his removal from heaven, never being able, under any circumstances, to return again. "I am better than he: thou hast created me out of fire, whereas him Thou hast created out of clay. [God] said: Down with thee, then, from this [state]—for it is not meet for thee to show arrogance here! Go forth, then: verily, among the humiliated shalt thou be!" (Q-Asad 7:12-13). Upon *Iblis'* departure, he asked Allah if he could live until the Day of Judgment. Allah granted *Iblis'* request. "Said [*Iblis*]: Grant me a respite till the Day when all shall be raised from the dead" (Q-Asad 7:14). Many Muslims believe that it was during *Iblis'* defiant fall when evil completely took over his entire being. However, when *Iblis* asked Allah for life until the Day of Judgment is how the jinn became immortal.

In *Iblis'* anger, he began to attempt to argue with God and say harsh threatening words. "[Whereupon *Iblis*] said: Now that Thou hast thwarted me, I shall most certainly lie in ambush for them all along Thy straight way, and shall most certainly fall upon them openly as well as in a manner beyond their ken, and from their right and from their left: and most of them Thou wilt find ungrateful" (Q-Asad 7:16-17). *Iblis* "will take every path he can against them, on their right, left, in front of them and behind them. He will attack them from every direction" (al-Ashqar 1998:71). It is said that all the jinn living with immortality until the Day of Judgment, whether good or evil, are all descendants of *Iblis*.

The Residence of Jinn

Since the great defiance of *Iblis*, jinn are not inhabitants of earth in quite the same manner as humans are. Jinn are the inhabitants of the subtle and immaterial, or subtly material, world (*alam al-malakut*) into which the

material and physical world is plunged, as if into a liquid. "If we picture a room in our mind, the 'medium' in which that imagined room exists supports form, but is itself subtle; it is the *alum al-malakut*. In traditional cosmology, the physical world is a 'crystallization', or projection, out of the subtle world, the 'ether'; the 'ether' is a projection out of the surrounding formless, or Angelic, world; and the Angelic world is projected out of Being" (Glasse 1989:457).

Jinn are said to be the inhabitants of the subtle world, some of whom are "non-central" beings like the non-human creatures of this world, while others are "central" beings, like humans. Jinn have free will, are endowed with an intellect, and are capable of grasping reality. Thus, some argue that they are capable of being saved. The jinn who occupy this central state have therefore religions and revelations, and some of their religions correspond to the religions of the world of men (Neuwirth 2001:442).

It is said that during the Prophet Muhammad's journey to Ta'if he recited the Qur'an at night in the desert and a party of the jinn came, listened, and believed. "Later their chiefs came to the Prophet Muhammad and made a *bay'ah*, or an allegiance, with him on the spot which is today the 'Mosque of the Jinn' in Mecca" (Esposito 2010).

Similarities in Jinn and Human Beings

While the world of the jinn is generally believed to be perfectly parallel to the human world, the primary difference is that jinn are able to move between their world and ours, while humans cannot perform this task (Rothberg 2004:36). Although the difference in nature between a jinn and a human is quite clear, the jinn, after *Iblis* was evicted from heaven, are further subject to limitations that humans are also limited by. The jinn cannot hear what goes on in heaven or see heaven. The jinn, once upon a time, were able to fly up and enter heaven whenever they liked. But they are no longer able to enter heaven, nor are they able to hear what is discussed in heaven. Furthermore, they are no longer able to know anything about destiny. Those jinn powers were removed when *Iblis* was evicted from heaven. "They are nonetheless still represented as being perfectly capable of rising up to heaven without divine assistance" (Chabbi 2003:48). The divine guard at the gates of heaven requires all of its powers, launching against them fiery traces (*shihab*), to throw them back to earth and prevent them from collecting the secrets of the future (Q-Asad 37:10; 72:8-9).

"Jinn are believed to be both less virtuous and less physical than humans, but like humans, endowed with the ability to choose between good and evil" (Esposito 2010). The jinn, like human Muslims, are required to worship Allah and follow Islam. The Qur'an states, "He governs all that

exists, from the celestial space to the earth; and in the end all shall ascend unto Him [for judgment] on a Day the length whereof will be [like] a thousand years of your reckoning" (Q-Asad 32:5).

Like humans they have free will and the right to choose between doing good or evil (Rothberg 2004:29). This being said, there are stories of Muslim, Jewish, and Christian jinns. This just further explains the greatness of God allowing free will. In the same way that jinns are allowed the right to choose between doing good or evil, they are also allowed the right to choose their religion. Nevertheless, no matter what their religious beliefs, as afore-mentioned, all jinn will be judged on the Day of Judgment as promised by Allah.

In the jinn's society they have social classes much like humans. They have kings, courts, armies, and rulers. Rothberg says that the jinn even have "wars and armies and they engage in negotiations and create treaties (2004:35). They have communities just like humans. Jinn even get married! They have families within their communities, just as humans do.

In addition, jinn, like humans, have the power to procreate. They have sexual intercourse in the same manner as humans. It is believed that humans and jinn have even inter-mingled and gotten married. In these marriages, humans and jinn have had children. "In any case, although people claim that such marriages occur presently and have occurred in the past, if such does occur, it is rare and strange. Furthermore, the one who performs it must seek the Islamic ruling concerning it. It could be a case that the one who does it is, in a sense, overpowered and has no way to escape that situation" (al-Ashqar 1998:23). Since jinn have stronger mystical powers than humans, it is presumed that the jinn use their powers to marry humans. This is also why an Islamic ruling is needed.

Powers of Jinn

That which clearly distinguishes jinn from humans are their powers and abilities. Muslims believe that God has given them these powers as a test for them. "If they oppress others with them, then they will be held accountable" (Mission Islam 2007). Because Muslims know and believe in the jinn's powers, they feel they can often make sense of the many mysteries that happen in our world. One of the powers of the jinn is that they are able to take on any physical form they like. "Thus, they can appear as humans, animals, trees and anything else" (Mission Islam 2007).

The ability to possess and take over the minds and bodies of other creatures is also a power that jinn are said to have utilized greatly over the centuries. "This however, is something which has been prohibited to them, as it is a great oppression to possess another being" (Mission Islam 2007).

In folk Islam, jinn are spirits invoked for magical purposes and are often held responsible for miraculous or unusual events and for a wide range of illnesses, which are popularly believed to have been caused by an imbalance between internal and external jinn. "Healers often speak directly to jinn prior to driving them out of patients" (Esposito 2010). This being said, Muslims believe that both good and bad jinn possess people for a wide variety of reasons. "Sometimes it is because the jinn or its family has been hurt accidentally. It could be because the jinn have fallen in love with the person. However, most of the time possession occurs because the jinn are simply malicious and wicked" (Esposito 2010). For example, legend has it that Sufis are considered to have divine powers they have received from the jinn, since they serve as intermediaries, between humans and the jinn. Because of their close relationship with and their ability to summon the jinn for obtaining spiritual power Sufi Muslims are believed to have the mystical knowledge necessary to be empowered for spiritual teaching, healing, and the use of natural medicines.

Sufis Healing and Medicine and Jinn

The Sufis are high rank spiritual teachers within Islam whose main responsibility is to maintain and transmit the hidden, deeper knowledge contained in the Qur'an. For Sufis, the supreme object in life is to serve and obey Allah, to emulate his divine attributes, and thereby to earn his good pleasure. Among the service to humanity that Sufis consider superior to all others is the healing of the sick. Their method is called the Sufi Healing. Kiymaz defines Sufism, mainly called *tasawwuf* in Islam, as "a mystic approach to Islam. While Islamic Orthodoxy emphasizes the outward, public living of Islam, Sufism suggests its followers to turn within themselves and live Islam within their souls" (Kiymaz 2002:10).

Sufis use the circle as a symbol to explain how they connect their practices to Islam. They see the Islamic Law (Shari'a) as the *circumference* of the circle, enclosing and ruling everything on this earth. They believe the Ultimate Truth (*Haqiqa*), Allah (one of the names of God in Islam), is the center point of this circle. They consider their way to reach Allah, which is their *tariqa* (meaning the path), is the radius that connects the circle with the central point. As there are infinite numbers of radii from the circumference of circle to the center of the circle, there are infinite numbers of *tariqas* (paths) that can lead to the ultimate truth. Another way Sufis explain this relationship is by using the analogue of a tree. They consider the roots of the tree as *Shari'a*, the trunk as the *tariqa* and the fruit as the *Haqiqa*. . . . Sufism is mostly rejected by the Islamic Orthodoxy because of

several reasons. The most obvious reason is that all tariqas have a sheikh, a spiritual leader who leads his/her disciples in their path leading to union with God. The disciple has to be totally obedient to his/her sheikh which places the sheikh in a higher level than the disciple. However, Islamic Orthodoxy say that every person is equal in front of God and no one can come between God and God's beings. Sufis claim the sheikh is only a guide for the disciples to find their path to God, not somebody who comes between. (Kiyamaz 2002:10, 11)

Sheikhs are the highest-ranking Sufis who have travelled the mystical path and are authorized to teach and heal. One of the most important medical traditions of the Middle East is Sufi medicine. The practices of the Sufis are not well known in the West, and their secrets have been taught to only a few individuals outside the Islamic tradition. Carefully guarded and passed on only within families, almost no physicians in the West have any knowledge on Sufi healing methods.

There are four kinds of healing methods that are widely recognized: (1) modern; (2) traditional (acupuncture, herb remedies, etc.); (3) spiritism (yoga, magnetism, hypnotism, breath exercise, etc.); and (4) Divine spiritual power. Some Sufi healers call upon the jinn while working within the divine spiritual power method. Sufi "healers often speak directly to jinn prior to driving them out of patients" (Esposito 2010).

An important aspect of Sufi medicine is the blending of plant essences known as *attars*,⁴ which are used as the foundation of all aromatherapy. The powerful effect of various aromas on the spiritual and physical state has been brought to the highest level in Sufi medicine over the centuries through practice and study and has recently become an increasingly Western practice. Dietary therapy and suggestions for everyday meals and cooking to prevent disorders is another important aspect of Sufi medicine, known as *unani-tibb* in India. Many of these practices find their roots in ancient times when there were no schools of medicine so the natural practices behind Sufi medicine was all that communities or tribes had to rely on. While Sufism is not viewed as orthodox in the overall religiosity of Islam and is frowned on by many Muslims, Sufi natural healing methodology is very important and appreciated by many.

Muslims also believe it is important to keep their bodies clean as the temple of God (Allah). They are bound by dietary restrictions and even in modern times they often go to a natural source for healing for many illnesses. These practices in Islam illustrate the importance many Muslims feel in maintaining an alignment with both religious traditions and their culture.

Evil Jinn

One of ways that evil jinn manipulate people is through visions in which they seek to lead people away from the worship of Allah. When a person sees a vision it is very hard to deny what one has seen, for seeing is believing. Only by having a knowledge of the world of the jinn and a commitment to Allah can a person fight off being led astray. In visions given by evil jinn they often take the form of people's parents, thereby convincing many that the souls of dead people are still present among the people of the earth.

As mentioned above, *Iblis* has set out on a mission to corrupt the earth and its inhabitants as much as possible. One way *Iblis* and his descendants (evil jinn) do this is through body possession, and it is not only humans who can be possessed, but also animals, trees, and other objects. By possessing people or objects evil jinn hope to cause people to worship others besides God, which is one of the worst offenses a person can commit. Recent stories about idols acting when possessed illustrate this phenomenon.

Not so long ago the worldwide phenomenon of Hindu idols drinking milk shocked the world. From Bombay to London, Delhi to California, countless idols were lapping up milk. Ganesh the elephant god, Hanuman the monkey god and even Shiva lingam, the male private organ (!), all seemed to guzzle down the milk as if there was no tomorrow! Unfortunately people were taken in by this and many flocked to feed the Hindu gods. This feat was undoubtedly done by the jinn as a classic attempt to make people worship false gods. (Islam Mission 2007)

Muslims believe that if a person becomes possessed by evil jinn, then the name of Allah has to be used in expelling them. The Prophet Muhammad and his companions used many invocations to exorcise the jinn, and in all of them the name of Allah is used to help the possessed person.

How contrary this is to many modern-day exorcists. Many exorcists often invoke the names of others besides God to exorcise the jinn. When the jinn leave, these people believe that their way was successful. However, this is a ploy of the jinn, as it knows that if it obeys the exorcist, then it has succeeded in making him worship others besides God. The jinn often returns when the exorcist leaves, as it knows that nothing except the words of God can stop it from oppressing others. (Islam Mission 2007)

This is another reason why Muslims have been commanded to recite the Qur'an frequently in their homes. More specifically, it is said that if

Surah 2 (*Al-Baqarah*) is recited daily it will rid any evil from the home. As the Prophet Muhammad said, "Whosoever is an enemy of God and His angels and His message-bearers, including Gabriel and Michael, [should know that,] verily, God is the enemy of all who deny the truth" (Q-Asad 2:97).

Muslims believe that "jinn may choose to fully possess a human, moving his or her limbs, or simply to 'haunt' an individual, bringing bad luck and ill fortune" (Rothberg 2004:35). Some people are also afraid of evil jinn, especially "dreaded . . . heretic jinn who rejected Islam. Muslims claimed these malevolent spirits could attack them at any time and in any place. They considered them harmful, and they endeavored to fend off their evil" (El-Zein 2009:70). The interesting thing about Muslim attitudes toward jinn is their belief that there are more good jinn than evil jinn. Furthermore, some people believe the good jinn play a greater role in their culture and religious beliefs so they tend not to be too worried or concerned about evil jinn.

Good Jinn

Because jinn have the right to choose between good and evil, this makes the jinn more widely accepted within Muslim religious tradition. Muslims feel "to ignore or try to avoid them is to invite defeat, loss of health and even death" (Lawrence 2007:185). Jinn are mentioned numerous times within various parts of the Qur'an and even have an entire Surah written about them (Sura 72). Although Muslims believe in jinn as a whole and accept them as part of their religion and religious practices, it does not mean that they are not aware of the evil works of the jinn. Muslims fully recognize that *Iblis* is "a betrayer of man" (Q-Asad 25:29), thus creating evil jinn who want nothing better than the destruction of humankind. The Qur'an teaches that just as there are some jinn who are "surrendered to God, there are some who have abandoned themselves to wrongdoing" (Q-Asad 72:13).

Jinn possession can take place not only by evil jinn, but also by good jinn. However the major difference is that Muslims welcome possession by good jinn. When possessed, a person is said "to be worn by" or "to wear" a jinn. Some Muslims who are possessed feel that it is a great honor to be chosen and possessed by good jinn. It is as much of an honor as to "wear a *hajib*," the female head covering, as it is to "wear a jinn."

Humans may also have friendships with jinn. Most jinn possessions are by male jinn who possess a human female, however, the female *jinnia* are believed to be particularly forceful and persuasive in pursuing a love affair with a human man. Rothenberg's research found that "the jinn wear

all people, but the majority are women. It is about 60 or 70 percent women, 10 to 15 percent children, and the rest are men. There are more women who are worn by the jinn because they are jealous [of] . . . each other. If a woman is married to a man that another woman loves, that other woman will make magic for the first one, and so on. In most cases the jinn comes by magic, rarely for revenge" (2004:37).

In addition to bodily possession, Muslim belief speaks about the good deeds of the jinn and is specifically recognized as the jinn's role in serving humans. For example, it is said that the jinn built Solomon's temple.

King Solomon had power over the jinn; he was, in fact, their King as well as the King of the human world. So when King Solomon decided to build Solomon's Pools just a short walk from Artas, he ordered the jinn to do the necessary labor. Obedient to their king, the jinn worked and worked, digging the pools and lining them with stone. In the meantime, King Solomon sat and watched, leaning on his staff. . . . Unbeknownst to the jinn, King Solomon actually died one day as he sat on his chair leaning on his staff. Only forty years later, when the progress of worms eating his staff finally left the king to tumble to the ground, was the truth known. Set free of their labor, which was practically complete anyway, the jinn fled to Artas. (Rothberg 2007:29)

Conclusion

There are many centuries of Islamic religious tradition connected to the jinn that is beyond the scope of this brief article. It is also true that there are some areas of Islamic cosmology that have attracted very little scholarship. Therefore, more research is necessary to further explore the nature of the jinn, their works, and how the jinn are accepted within the various sectors of Islamic society. Nevertheless, this brief overview was provided as an introduction to the world of the jinn within the cosmology of Islam.

This research has also provided background information to show that Islam, like many Christian religiosities, has an unspoken mystical aspect. The intent of this article is that it be used as background information to encourage more research into the deeper complexities of the Islamic religion. Christian readers should not allow the differing views or practices of a religious group to provide a singular understanding concerning the views of the entire religious group. For example, there are some Christians who are superstitious. This does not mean all Christians are superstitious. In the same way, while many Muslims are involved with the jinn there are some who have nothing to do with them.

Nevertheless, there are some uncanny correlations between what Islam believes about *Iblis* (Satan) and the evil jinn, and what Christians believe

about Satan and evil angels. Christians find warning in the Holy Bible concerning the deceptions of Satan and the Qur'an offers similar warnings. It is my hope that this research has provided a deeper insight, not just about Islamic beliefs, but also more specifically about the cosmology within the history and make-up of Islamic religious tradition so that Christians can be better informed as interreligious dialogue takes place.

Notes

¹Asad refers to the The Message of The Qur'an. This is a version of the Qur'an that was transliterated by Muhammad Asad, who devoted two years to the correct translation for modern readers. It is said to be the best English version of the Qur'an.

²Future quotations from Asad's, The Message of The Qur'an, will be documented as a Qur'anic ancient text (i.e., Q-Asad 2:34, which is representative of the surah and verse).

³All references to the Qur'an are taken from Asad, Muhammad. *The Message of the Qur'an*. Dubai: Oriental Press, 2008.

⁴Attars is named after Fariduddin Attar, one of the major Sufi teachers, who wrote over 30 books.

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MILTON ADAMS

"Game Changers" in a Developing Global Culture—Part 2

A definition of *game changer* from the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* reads, "a newly introduced element or factor that changes an existing situation or activity in a significant way." It is in this sense the term *game changers* is used to refer to characteristics of the developing global culture. These game changers do not stand independent of each other. They frequently overlap. And, while it is helpful to acknowledge the specific contribution of each, the interplay among them helps to better understand the culture they are shaping.

If you have yet to watch the suggested videos in Part 1, *Biblical Leadership in a Developing Global Culture*, this would be a good time to do so. They provide information, material, and knowledge that will be assumed as this article explores seven game changers of this developing global culture.

A Cause (Conviction) and a Voice

Discontents are people who are often labeled as troublemakers. They may be described or mislabeled as subversive, oppositional, uncooperative, nonconformist, heretic, or at least unconventional—even when theirs is a *holy discontent* (Godin 2008:11; Hamel). This could mean that they are dissatisfied for the *right* reasons.

The youthful David who killed Goliath was criticized by his own brothers and mocked by Saul as "ridiculous" for confronting the status quo on the Israelite battlefield (1 Sam 17:26-33 NLT). Verse 34 says, "But David persisted."

Mahatma Gandhi, Helen Keller, Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, and Malala Yousafzai persisted. Discontents with a *right* cause—both people who are well known and people who will never be widely known until heaven—have a laser focus that drives them to action in what Hybels calls their "Popeye moments." They are driven by what they believe is a God-ordained conviction. It may be global issues like world poverty, equality,

or modern slavery. Or it might be as small and unnoticed as planting a house church or providing clean drinking water to villagers who do not have a safe water supply.

There have always been people driven to action by a holy discontent, but the Internet based developing global culture easily provides their cause (conviction) with a voice. Within Christianity today, the modern crisis described by David T. Olson, in his book *The American Church in Crisis*, is providing a cause of legitimate concern, a rightful dissatisfaction, a holy discontent, among both Christian lay people and clergy (Olson 2008). And in today's global culture, these people—using the aid of technology like Facebook and other social networking services—easily have a global voice and can rally the resources necessary to carry out their convictions, even if it means going around established leadership and/or institutions.

There are also discontents who do cause problems and make trouble just for the sake of trouble-making; theirs is an *unholy discontent*. And while they will always exist, they should never become an excuse to discredit their counterparts. Discerning leaders seek to correctly distinguish between the two. The wisdom of Gamaliel, a high level church leader of his day, provides a paradigm worth emulating:

²⁹ But Peter and the apostles replied, “We must obey God rather than any human authority.” ³⁰ The God of our ancestors raised Jesus from the dead after you killed him by hanging him on a cross. ³¹ Then God put him in the place of honor at his right hand as Prince and Savior. He did this so the people of Israel would repent of their sins and be forgiven. ³² We are witnesses of these things and so is the Holy Spirit, who is given by God to those who obey him.”

³³ When they heard this, the high council was furious and decided to kill them. ³⁴ But one member, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, who was an expert in religious law and respected by all the people, stood up and ordered that the men be sent outside the council chamber for a while. ³⁵ Then he said to his colleagues, “Men of Israel, take care what you are planning to do to these men! ³⁶ Some time ago there was that fellow Theudas, who pretended to be someone great. About 400 others joined him, but he was killed, and all his followers went their various ways. The whole movement came to nothing. ³⁷ After him, at the time of the census, there was Judas of Galilee. He got people to follow him, but he was killed, too, and all his followers were scattered.

³⁸ “So my advice is, leave these men alone. Let them go. If they are planning and doing these things merely on their own, it will soon be overthrown.

³⁹ But if it is from God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You may even find yourselves fighting against God!” (Acts 5:29–39, italics added)

In the developing global culture, biblical church leaders will need to see

themselves more as cheer leaders, equippers, facilitators, and confirmers of God-honoring, grassroots ministry than as its gate keepers. Tom Evans, associate director of NADEI highlights the following in his Church Planting Presentation: Churches DO NOT Naturally Move Towards Church Planting. He continues on to accurately summarize five areas that contribute to this dynamic: “LOSS of Fellowship, LOSS of Finances, LOSS of Ministry Leaders, LACK of Kingdom Focus, and LACK of Health” (2013: slide 22). These three LOSSES are significant to Adventist pastors because, at their core, Seventh-day Adventist Conference hiring formulas typically measure pastoral success in terms of tithe, membership/attendance, and baptisms/professions of faith. This has contributed to an unspoken conflict of interest between pastoral self-preservation and the empowerment of lay people in Kingdom-focused expansion. This also calls for sacrifice of either pastoral “success” or requires a lay ministry.

Willing to Work Without Permission

Permission seekers are becoming a thing of the past (Knot 2014). They are not looking for committee approval or a church vote (Godin 2008:138). They are not looking for government support or affirmation from educational systems. Have you ever heard of home schools? Home births? DIY? Have you ever heard of herding cats? In a developing global culture where trust must be earned, people are less likely to go with the flow. It is becoming a characteristic of the global culture which biblical church leaders are now called to serve. And since it is coming, as Clay Shirky concludes in his video, “we might as well get good at it” (Shirky n.d.).

As biblical church leaders encourage, empower, and inspire lay people to have an intimate relationship with God, they will affirm their trust in that relationship; their approval of God-honoring, grassroots ministry; and their support of people accepting God’s invitation to join him in his Kingdom work—whatever, whenever, and wherever it may be.

No Turf Lines

Much has been written on the globalization of business practices in the past 50 years. Our world is becoming a world without walls. Fifty to one hundred years ago, functional structures had to be designed without the aid of telephones, fax machines, email, the internet, file sharing, and the iCloud. One hundred years ago the postal service was the most common—or only—mode of long-distance communication. Postal service communication had its own set of advantages and disadvantages; and modern technology is providing a new set of tools for biblical church leaders to navigate as they serve God’s people. One of these is a global worldview

that no longer subscribes to turf protection (Godin 2008:4, 112). As lay people, using technology, cross over territorial lines, they have access to a wide variety of resources: to different ways of doing God-honoring ministry, new ways to support and encouragement each other, and to follow *other* leaders whom they may choose to follow. Local church leadership may be tempted to defend *their* territory. Yet biblical leaders will appreciate and affirm Kingdom work and recognize that Kingdom workers share the common goal of spending eternity with Christ and those they have had the privilege of leading to Jesus.

Belonging Before Believing

Belonging has been turned upside down. Joseph R. Myers, in his book, *The Search to Belong: Rethinking Intimacy, Community, and Small Groups*, gets right to the point regarding the challenges facing biblical church leaders: "We live in a culture that now prioritizes belonging over believing. Pastors and key leaders sense that they need to adjust their language in order to adapt to this cultural shift. The question is, 'How?' *The Search to Belong* suggests a framework for change" (Myers 2003:6).

Prioritizing belonging over believing can appear to pose a real problem for any "club" styled organization that has a set of beliefs or rules to which one must adhere in order to belong. For hundreds of years conventional denominational systems have typically agreed that baptism equaled belonging. The progressive flow went as follows: A persons would *believe* the right set of theology > change their *behavior* > then they could be *baptized* which equaled *belonging*. In other words, belief led to behavior, which led to baptism, which equaled belonging. Note the starting point was belief. Answers were often given in the context of a set of doctrinal Bible studies where even a relationship with Christ was studied in the same intellectual paradigm as what happens when a person dies. Ultimately the opportunity to belong is decided by the club or organization. For a more pictorial view: Believe > Behave > Baptized = Belong.

In contrast, the new flow looks like this: Belong > Behave > Believe > Baptized.

Notice the new flow begins with the question, "Do I belong?" And notice who is asking this question: the individual, not the organization. The new flow goes like this: Do I feel like I belong? Then I will spend time with you. In the context of safe and authentic relationships, "by beholding" I become changed, even though I may not recognize the change that is happening within me. In other words, I begin to "experience truth" long before I "learn truth." Eventually I begin asking you questions about what you believe. Carefully and patiently you accept God's invitations to help

me along my journey as I am experiencing, learning, and growing closer to Christ. The day comes when I am baptized.

Myers continues to challenge biblical leaders:

There are many who consider themselves part of the community of faith until they are confronted by someone who tells them otherwise. Our culture wonders—with some confusion—“Why don’t I belong?” And if there is one place that can welcome them with open arms, it is [should be] the church. In Jesus’ story of the prodigal, the father welcomed his boy home by redefining what it meant to belong to the family. Perhaps our definitions ought likewise to broaden. (2003:26)

In this developing global culture an example of this kind of new norm is Facebook’s “likes,” “groups,” and “recommends.” There are millions of pages on Facebook and I choose to “like” a page. I ask to be part of a “Group.” And I make “recommandations” to my friends—which is one of the most powerful forms of advertising—nothing less than a personal testimony.

Before leaving this game changer, Myers raises one more issue related to belonging: the use of language. Systems often develop in-house language that divides those who belong to the club or organization from those who do not belong. He says,

Language may be the key element for developing and nurturing community. As people search for community, they are listening with their eyes, ears, and emotions. They are keenly aware of how we tell them they belong or don’t belong.

It once seemed simpler. There were only two categories: members and nonmembers. Membership required contracts, beliefs, commitments, and rituals. There was a clearer line that determined when someone was “in.” Now we struggle to build a community of believers in a culture that wants to experience belonging over believing.

People crave connection, not contracts. They want to participate in our rituals, even though they may not yet fully understand their meaning. They see a kaleidoscope of possibilities for belonging. But our language struggles to fully express this spectrum of possibilities. (Myers 2003:26-27)

There is no easy response to this developing value of belonging before believing. But one of the hallmarks of missionaries (Christians) is that we are continually seeking new ways, new methods, of reaching people in their culture and then authentically leading them to Jesus Christ.

Closely related to this game changer is one possibly even more challenging.

Embracing a message, not a logo. In 1965 Billy Graham penned these words,

Multitudes of Christians within the church are moving toward the point where they may reject the institution that we call the church. They are beginning to turn to more simplified forms of worship. They are hungry for a personal and vital experience with Jesus Christ. They want a heartwarming personal faith. Unless the church quickly recovers its authoritative biblical message, we may witness the spectacle of millions of Christians going outside the institutional church to find spiritual food. (87)

This shift was not new when Graham penned his observations. Years earlier White had written:

Before the final visitation of God's judgments upon the earth, there will be, among the people of the Lord, such a revival of primitive godliness as has not been witnessed since apostolic times. The Spirit and power of God will be poured out upon His children. At that time many will separate themselves from those churches in which the love of this world has supplanted love for God and His Word. Many, both of ministers and people, will gladly accept those great truths which God has caused to be proclaimed at this time, to prepare a people for the Lord's second coming. (1939:464)

Then, in 2005, George Barna's book *Revolution* sent shock waves throughout Christendom when he reported that between 2000 and 2005, 20 million Americans left their local churches in search of a deeper walk with God. During a radio interview, Barna, with guest Frank Viola, reported that an estimated 70 million now meet outside church walls in their quest to find God (Barna and Viola).

The new Revolution differs in that its primary impetus is not salvation among the unrepentant but the personal renewal and recommitment of believers. *The dominant catalyst is people's desperation for a genuine relationship with God. The renewal of that relationship spurs believers to participate in spreading the gospel. Rather than relying on a relative handful of inspired preachers to promote a national revival, the emerging Revolution is truly a grassroots explosion of commitment to God that will refine the Church and result in a natural and widespread immersion in outreach.* (Barna 2005:13, 103)

Peter Roennfeldt says people are "leaving church to be Church!" As you explore this game changer, give this a fair and honest reading.

For hundreds of years Christian denominations have been the norm. In recent history the “churchscape” began to change and non-denominational churches began to appear. Now the non-denominational sector has essentially become its own denomination. The new horizon of the changing global culture is giving way to post-denominational faith represented by a group of people often referred to as the “nones.”

Jon Dybdahl in 2006 wrote about this shift as a possible future development, although he did not use the word “nones.” In the conclusions of his two part article, *Doing Theology in Mission*, he suggests that people who embrace a message “may not necessarily join the visible institutional form” of a given denomination (21). Loren Seibold, in his two-part *Columbia Union Visitor* article, quotes Monte Sahlin: “Extrapolating that trend line, by 2020 the ‘nones’ may be the majority of American young adults, and by 2050 a majority of all Americans” (2013:2).

Ready or not, the developing global culture is here and will intensify. What a missional opportunity to embrace! As Cauley mentioned earlier, we must be about change if we are going to be successful in our mission. This is relevant advice for the leaders of any denomination.

The Test of Truth

Dwight Nelson, at the risk of being misunderstood, courageously treads where few are willing to tread in his sermon, “Something More Important Than Truth.” He correctly exegetes Matt 23:23 showing the temptation for people to place truth above relationships. “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin, and have neglected the *weightier matters* of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone” (NKJV).

Matthew echoes this Old Testament value found in Micah 6:8: “He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?”

This is not to say that truth is unimportant. *This is to say that if we lose the relationship in the process of “truth-telling” then we have lost the ability to lead a person to a relationship with Christ* who is “the way the truth and the life” (John 14:6, italics supplied). This is why it is so important to accept God’s invitations to join him in his missionary work (John 5:16-22). In this way, God’s people will never run ahead of or lag behind God’s work.

In this developing global culture these weightier matters are becoming the new “tests of truth.” People used to ask, *What* is truth? Now, they are asking, *Who* is truth? Who truly cares about human need? Who is honest and real? Whose walk truly matches his talk? Who is true to her friends behind their backs? Who is trustworthy in business transactions? If the

one being truth-tested does not pass this first test, “neglecting the weightier *matters* of the law: justice and mercy and faith,” then he/she will most likely not be given the opportunity to further disciple the observer. Nelson says, “It [Matthew 23:23] teaches us that the value of *people* transcends the virtue of *duty*.”

Sahlin, as part of his “Its Time” presentation shared sobering statistics of the humanitarian needs of the urban centers around our globe. To summarize, “Urbanization results in unprecedented concentrations of human need. Cities have massive populations in poverty, with health needs and looking for education. Around the globe, a total of 828 million people live in urban slums” (2013:12). “The majority of the poor in the urban areas of Africa and Asia must carry water or buy it from vendors. Nearly half of the poor in the Americas are in the same situation” (13). “In urban Africa, malnutrition among young children is more than twice as likely as in rural areas. In Asia, the gap is less, but malnutrition is still more likely in urban communities than in rural areas. In the Americas, there is no gap, but overall the incidence of malnutrition is somewhat higher” (15).

Any public evangelistic strategy — where thousands of dollars are spent reaching local communities and hundreds of thousands are spent reaching the urban centers of the world — must grow *out of* a context where the weightier matters of the law, namely, “justice and mercy and faith,” have abundantly preceded the invitation to follow Christ. This resonates with White’s classic description of evangelistic success. Notice how the first four items (80 percent) deal with humanitarian needs, followed by an “evangelistic” appeal (20 percent) to follow Christ.

Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior [1] mingled with men as one who desired their good. He [2] showed His sympathy for them, [3] ministered to their needs, and [4] won their confidence. [5] Then He bade them, “Follow Me.” There is need of coming close to the people by personal effort. If less time were given to sermonizing, and more time were spent in personal ministry, greater results would be seen. The poor are to be relieved, the sick cared for, the sorrowing and the bereaved comforted, the ignorant instructed, the inexperienced counseled. We are to weep with those that weep, and rejoice with those that rejoice. Accompanied by the power of persuasion, the power of prayer, the power of the love of God, this work will not, cannot, be without fruit. (White 1905:143-144, numbering supplied)

As Cauley summarizes, “Underlying Jesus’ evangelistic strategy to reach the multitudes was caring compassion. What He taught He lived. Christ’s method was simply meeting needs in the Father’s name and

sharing the Father's love and truth in a broken, hurting first century world (see *Ministry of Healing*, page 143). His first Century strategy has not changed in the 21st Century" (Cauley 2013:7).

Within this global culture, these new "tests of truth" will test—not a doctrine, not a philosophy, not an idea—but the person who mingles, sympathizes, ministers, and wins a seeker's confidence. Then, in the security of authentic relationship the seeker grants a Christian the privilege of leading him/her to *the Person*—the Way, the Truth, and the Life!

Game Changers Summary

Game changers change the game. They cause chaos and force biblical leaders to go back to Scripture and reevaluate models and unspoken assumptions. These game changers are here to stay and by the grace of God, biblical church leaders will embrace the opportunities they offer for authentic biblical leadership.

The next section considers the Simple Church Global Network as one example that has attempted to apply biblical principles and understanding to these game changers in this developing global culture.

Simple Church Global Network

Designed for the Developing Global Culture

Simple Church is a very, very old, new idea. The New Testament was primarily a house church network. Roger W. Gehring, in his landmark volume, *House Church and Mission: The Importance of Household Structures in Early Christianity*, authoritatively says,

On one point that nearly all NT scholars presently agree: Early Christians met almost exclusively in the homes of individual members of the congregation. For nearly three hundred years—until the fourth century, when Constantine began building the first basilicas throughout the Roman Empire—Christians gathered in private houses built initially for domestic use, not in church buildings originally constructed for the sole purpose of public worship. (2004:1)

This is one reason why the New Testament is full of house church references. Here are some of the more direct biblical references: "Please give my greetings to the church that meets in their home" (Rom 16:5). "The churches here in the province of Asia greet you heartily in the Lord, along with Aquila and Priscilla and all the others who gather in their home for church meetings" (1 Cor 16:19). "Please give my greetings to our Christian brothers and sisters at Laodicea, and to Nympha and those who meet in

her house" (Col 4:15). "This letter is from Paul, . . . I am also writing to the church that meets in your house" (Phil 1:1-3).

A Modern Missionary Network

Eighty-seven percent of the United States' population (95%-98% for Western Europe, Australia and New Zealand) do *not* go to church on a given weekend. How do God's people reach them? Methods come and go. Cultures continually change. And missionaries must change their ways of reaching people. No single method can be the only—or the final—answer. However, since its inception in 2008, this Simple Church network has been an honest attempt to apply the above biblical principles in both its model and leadership assumptions, while working within this developing global culture.

The Heartbeat of Simple Church

SimpleChurchAtHome.com, now a global network, is driven by one missionary question: *In today's developing global culture, how do we reach, with the everlasting gospel of Jesus Christ, people who most likely will not walk into a conventional church?* It is being answered every Sabbath by lay people meeting in homes around the world. This is Simple Church's missionary heartbeat, period.

Ellen White's encouragement gives hope to any missionary and guidance to the biblical leader who empowers, encourages, and cheer-leads Kingdom work:

God selects his messengers, and gives them his message; and he says, "Forbid them not." New methods must be introduced. God's people must awake to the necessities of the time in which they are living. God has men [and women] whom he will call into his service,—men who will not carry forward the work in the lifeless way in which it has been carried forward in the past. Many who have not yet heard the message to be given to the world, have learned the meaning of self-denial and self-sacrifice. Men will accept the truth who will work with earnestness and zeal, tact and understanding. Let none discourage these zealous workers. In some things they will make mistakes, and will need to be corrected and instructed. But have not men who have been long in the truth made mistakes, and needed correction and instruction? When they made mistakes, the Lord did not cast them off, but healed them and strengthened them, presenting them with his banner to hold aloft. (1902: para. 13)

Whenever and wherever there are lay people who are convicted to

leave their comfort zones for the specific purpose of reaching secular and/or unchurched people in God-honoring ways, it is the goal of the Simple Church Global Network to empower them to do all the work of disciple making. Six unique network features help accomplish this mission:

Key Features of the Simple Church Global Network

1. Led by lay people: Simple Church does not hire anyone to church plant. Lay people accept God's invitation to join him in his missionary work, whatever, whenever, and wherever it may be. Simple Church is for reaching the mission field that lives in our neighborhoods.

2. In homes: A home is a personal space where people go because of friendship. By contrast, public spaces (stores, medical offices, restaurants, churches, etc.) exist to provide a service to the consumer. This consumerist value bleeds over into conventional churches. Simple Churches bypasses the consumerist values of public spaces by meeting in home where people gather because of a friendship.

3. On Sabbath: Sabbath is the day God chooses to spend with his creation. Creation Sabbath was established at the foundation of this work, before sin, before the nation of Israel existed. It is the only day God set aside at creation as holy and sanctified. It is a day for rest, restoration, and re-creation—physical, mental, spiritual.

4. Coached by others who are actually planting a Simple Church: Active CORE4 Simple Church missionary work is what makes one a qualified and an authentic Simple Church coach.

5. Connected to local churches and conferences: From its inception, Simple Church has maintained an invitational posture. We freely share and work with anyone interested in collaborating, at both the layperson and church leadership levels. Simple Church has been blessed with the support and partnership of church leaders, local conferences, unions, divisions and AdventistMission.com.

6. Based on church planting movement (CPM) principles and values: There are standard CPM values that are typical of most church planting movements. The Simple Church Global Network has articulated them.

Church Planting Movement Principles and Values As Applied in the Simple Church Global Network

1. Sola Scriptura theology: Does the Bible inform our life, polity, and doctrine?

2. Faithful to the everlasting gospel of Jesus Christ: The gospel is that Christ's sacrificial life and death is sufficient to save all who come to him by faith (1 Pet 3:18; Heb 7:25; Titus 2:11). Christ commissioned this good

news to go to the world (Matt 24:14; 28:19–20). The everlasting gospel begins a threefold message that prepares the world for Jesus' coming (Rev 14:6–16).

3. Sustainable for the long term: Typically the bigger anything becomes, the more complex it becomes. Simple Church has been able to maintain a simple and flexible infrastructure that aids long-term sustainability. We believe that this simple design will be sustainably even with exponential growth because it is based on CPM principles.

4. Easily and exponentially reproducible: Simple Church has a two-phase training process that takes about 28 hours to complete. In addition, there are numerous easy-to-access resources and weekly contact with one's coach. This simple training process and coaching process provides an easily and exponentially reproducible framework.

5. Cost effective: "The average church in the United States will spend as much as 64% of its budget on staff salaries. Additionally, it will spend as much as 30% of its offerings on maintaining its buildings" (Tenny-Brittian 2005:67–68, Atkerson, 2005:86). As I work with church leaders around the world, I am often told about their desire to reach the cities—a noble and worthwhile focus. But administrators quickly add that they are financially not able to (1) hire pastors or Bible workers, (2) buy real estate in the cities, or (3) build a multi-million dollar building to compete in a consumer-driven church world. Simple Church is truly cost effective.

6. Does it work? (Is it missionally effective?) This is not a reference to a conventional church success matrix: tithe, attendance, and baptisms. The question, "*Does it work?*" is a direct reference to Simple Church's ability to provide a biblically sound model with assumptions that empower lay people to do all the work of disciple making. Simple Church is working, especially in the context of the developing global culture where the rules are changing.

Summary

I hope this article is both challenging and encouraging. I do not have all the answers, and have not asked all the questions, nor explored all the dynamics and implications of the changing global culture. Nevertheless, it is my hope that Christian leaders will be faithful to the missionary imperative and unprecedented opportunity we have been given in the game-changing shifts of the new global cultural.

Biblical leaders do not need to be afraid, threatened, frustrated, or take a defensive posture towards this developing global cultural shift. Thanks to the Internet, many correctly suggest that this shift is here to stay and will only intensify. We must press forward in Jesus' name as we accept his invitations to join him in his Kingdom work.

It is my prayer that we will embrace biblical principles of leadership, and recognizing our privilege and responsibility to encourage, empower, and equip lay “co-missionaries” in the developing global culture.

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JIRÍ MOSKALA

Mapping Neo-Atheist and Other Recent Attacks on the Character of God: A Case of Theodicy

For biblically and theologically thinking Christians, to know existentially Christ means eternal life. “Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent” (John 17:3 NIV). Baptist pastor Jeremy LaBorde rightly states: “What you believe to be true will control you, whether it’s true or not” (n.d.). Richard Rice aptly observes:

Our understanding of God has enormous practical significance. . . . What we think of God and how we respond to Him are closely related. An inaccurate view of God can have disastrous effect on personal religious experience. We could never love a hostile, tyrannical being. . . . And we could not respect a mild, indulgent figure who never took us seriously. Our personal religious experience can be healthy only if we hold an adequate conception of God. (1985:10)

Happiness and balance in life depends on the right picture of God. However, the recent attacks on God’s character in different forms not only by atheists but even Christian thinkers influence many, leading to a realization of the importance of theodicy (a combination of two Greek words, *theos* “God” and *diké* “justice,” referring to a discussion on the problem of evil and a defense of the justice of God in the context of the existence of evil). “Theodicy is the attempt to defend divine justice in the face of aberrant phenomena that appear to indicate the deity’s indifference or hostility toward virtuous people” (Crenshaw 1992:6:444).

Atheism in My Life

This article is closely related to my own experience with atheism. Atheism was part of my personal journey, even though I was never an atheist, but for almost 40 years I was daily bombarded with this ideology. I was

born, grew up, and lived in an atheistic state (in the former Czechoslovakia, today the Czech Republic, one of the strongholds of atheism),¹ and went to atheistic schools. All ideology was atheistic and built on the evolutionary theory and the premise that the stronger will survive. Even though I lived in a Seventh-day Adventist family, one of the integral members of our family was my uncle who lived with us and was a convinced atheist. He tried hard to persuade me that the evolutionary hypothesis was the best explanation for the origins of life and that to believe in God was nonsense and only good for weak, uneducated, and old people. My story is connected even with persecution under the atheistic government. I was ridiculed in schools for being a Seventh-day Adventist Christian; my father had immense difficulties at work for his beliefs related especially to Sabbath observance; my father-in-law was imprisoned for his faith. During my studies, I had to listen to many atheistic lectures and reasoning (propaganda) and read atheistic books. In my university studies in Prague, I had some of the best Marxist's philosophers teach me their ideology and philosophy. In other words, I was constantly confronted with atheism.

I have learned that atheism is also a sort of religion, a different form, but nevertheless a religion that is built on reason as the highest authority. In such a system, evolutionary theory is untouchable, and some thinkers (their saints/gurus) are "worshipped" (e.g., Lenin, Marx, Engels, Nietzsche, Sartre, and others). Not everyone would agree with my simplified assessment, but this is what I lived, and observed.

Brief Outline

This paper briefly compares classical atheism with neo-atheism, and presents four apostles of neo-atheism (Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett, Christopher Hitchens, and Sam Harris) along with their main literature and describes their principal arguments. In the following section, I mention attacks on the character of God from Christian writers and point to the sources that summarize the answers of Christian scholars, theologians, and apologists. In the last exegetical-theological section of my paper, I deal with one biblical example, namely Job's sufferings, in order to demonstrate that these recent attacks lack substance, because they are not working contextually and theologically with the biblical material. They are highly selective and retell the biblical story with their own twist in order to ridicule a Christian faith in God and who He is in order to deny His existence. They do not do justice to the original intent of the biblical text and to the overall actual biblical picture of God. I conclude with an emphasis on the importance of cultivating and proclaiming the right picture of God, because everything in our spiritual life depends on the true picture of God.

Classical Atheism

Main Claim and Reasoning

Atheists' principle assertion is that religion is a human invention, is wrong, and only for the weak. Karl Marx stated: "Man makes religion, religion does not make man. Religion is, indeed, the self-consciousness and self-esteem of man who has either not yet won through to himself, or has already lost himself again. . . . Religion is the opium of the people!" (1976:3:1). Lenin claimed: "'Religion is the opium of the people': this saying of Marx is the cornerstone of the entire ideology of Marxism about religion."² Exceptionally naïve argumentation accompanied classical atheism. I remember as a 7 or 8 year-old boy that I had to read in school a book in which on the first page was this argument, taken from Ps 14:1 and 53:1 that "there is no God." Omitted, of course, was the first part of the sentence: "The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God.'"

It seems that often when people wanted to find answers to their hard questions, they bought into atheism. The evolutionary hypothesis provided an easy solution to the issue of the origin of life, however, the strongest arguments against Christianity were based on the injustice in the world, the suffering of innocent people, questions on how a good and omnipotent God could allow concentration camps, torture, rapes, violence, and exploitation. Many felt that if such evil phenomena exist, it means that God does not exist. Others were disappointed with Christian behavior and lifestyle (atheists often point to the countless religious wars, the Dark Ages with the dominance of the inquisition, and fighting among Christians), and the dominant churches' dogmatics (like the doctrine of hell, the intercessory ministry of the saints, and belief in miracles).

Bertrand Russell explains that if one wants to be intellectually honest and scientific then such a person cannot believe in God (1957:12). He elaborates on philosophical arguments that deny God's existence and also rejected Christianity because of the doctrine of hell: "There is one very serious defect to my mind in Christ's moral character, and that is that He believed in hell. I do not myself feel that any person who is really profoundly humane can believe in everlasting punishment." Russell continues: "I must say that I think all this doctrine, that hell-fire is a punishment for sin, is a doctrine of cruelty. It is a doctrine that put cruelty into the world and gave the world generations of cruel torture; and the Christ of the Gospels, if you could take Him as His chroniclers represent Him, would certainly have to be considered partly responsible for that" (12, 13).

Classical atheists usually did not paint a dark picture of God. It was enough for them to assert God's non-existence and the folly related to believing in God. Some even expressed their frustration and nostalgia,

because there were not good enough reasons to believe in God even though the human heart longs for a loving God to rest in.³ Thomas Hardy in his poem “God’s Funeral” (n.d.) expresses the melancholy that God is dead:

XI

“How sweet it was in years far hied
To start the wheels of day with trustful prayer,
To lie down liegely at the eventide
And feel a blest assurance he was there!

XIV

I could not prop their faith: and yet
Many I had known: with all I sympathized;
And though struck speechless, I did not forget
That what was mourned for, I, too, once had prized.

XV

Still, how to bear such loss I deemed
The insistent question for each animate mind,
And gazing, to my growing sight there seemed
A pale yet positive gleam low down behind,

XVI

Whereof, to lift the general night,
A certain few who stood aloof had said,
‘See you upon the horizon that small light —
Swelling somewhat?’ Each mourner shook his head.

XVII

And they composed a crowd of whom
Some were right good, and many nigh the best. . . .
Thus dazed and puzzled ‘twixt the gleam and gloom
Mechanically I followed with the rest.”

Matthew Arnold in a poem “Dover Beach” eloquently describes these strange feelings when one loses the certainty and beauty of faith:

The Sea of Faith

Was once, too, at the full, and round earth’s shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
Retreating, to the breath
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world.

Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! For the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.”

One would expect that with the fall of the Iron Curtain and communism in 1989 and the early 1990s of the last century that the atheistic ideology would die too. However, while seemingly the ideology of atheism and its propaganda was declining, especially after 9/11/2001, it has recently been resurrected because people have had enough of organized religion with its associated violence, greed, superficiality, fakery, and selfishness, and constant hunger for power, glory, and richness. Atheism is now reviving, is being promoted in more subtle ways, and has become quite aggressive. It is still built on the foundation stone of Darwin’s theory of evolution, and this hypothesis has also influenced the interpretation of the evolution of religion from many gods to a more pure form of one God and then to the best and pinnacle concept of evolution—no god. At the end, one’s own reason and scientific worldview decide everything.

Neo-Atheism

With the rise of neo-atheism comes a new phenomenon. The naturalistic origin of life is now mixed with aggressive attacks on religion, including both Islam and Christianity. Neo-Atheists repeat the old atheistic arguments with better scientific reasoning and new tactics. They try to demonstrate not only a foolishness and wrongness of believing in God, but they claim that religion is evil, dangerous, and harmful! They viciously attack the God of the Old Testament and aggressively criticize all religion! They express their anger, yet they write with charm and elegance. Four gurus are spokespersons of neo-atheism in today’s world.

Richard Dawkins

Richard Dawkins is the most famous of the four as well as an outstanding author.⁴ He is emeritus professor of evolutionary biology at the University of Oxford and strongly challenges Christians, their faith, and religion. Dawkins formulated the most articulate and wicked attack on the God of the Bible: “The God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction: jealous and proud of it; a petty, unjust, unforgiving

control freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser; a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully” (2008:51). Marcion in the second century after Christ had already expressed negative thought about the God of the Old Testament, but Dawkins plays *forte fortissimo* with the same melody and strongly claims that the God of the Hebrew Scriptures is a moral monster. Moreover, Dawkins advocates an opinion that everything has only biological origin. He also speaks about the “hell houses of Pastor Keenan Roberts” (2008:359–362) and understandably criticizes the Christian teaching on hell. Needless to say, Dawkins does not believe in such a cruel “God” and neither do I, because the biblical God is different and His main characteristic is love!

Sam Harris

Sam Harris is a critic of religion and especially famous for his three books: *The End of Faith*, *Letter to a Christian Nation*, and *The Moral Landscape: How Science Can Determine Human Values*. His first book, *The End of Faith*, fueled a debate about the validity of religion (2004). In his *Letter to a Christian Nation* (2006), he ferociously stands against child sacrifices to bloodthirsty gods and argues that the bloody atoning sacrifice of Jesus for humanity’s transgressions is reminiscent of those perverted religious practices. Then he added *The Moral Landscape: How Science Can Determine Human Values* (2010) because he realized that many people do not think that science and evolution have anything to say on the subject of morality and the formation of human values. He tries to answer that puzzle through science, otherwise people’s ethical behavior is one of the primary justifications for the Christian faith.

Christopher Hitchens

Christopher Hitchens is a polemicist and journalist who also presents a case against religion. The title of his main book eloquently describes why he wrote it and what his aim is: *God Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything* (2007). This phrase is a play on a crucial Muslim saying: “*Allahu Agbar*” meaning “God/Allah is great” which is used in various contexts by Muslims (e.g., in formal prayers or in the calls for prayer [*adhān*] by the muezzin at the prescribed worship times each day). Hitchens denies the relevancy of any religion and defines religion as a social poison. With his reading of the major religious texts, he states that religion is a man-made wish, a cause of dangerous sexual control, and a distortion of human understanding of origins. He argues for a secular life based on science and reason and replaces the doctrine of hell with the Hubble Telescope’s

splendid view of the universe and Moses with the beauty and miracles of nature.

Daniel Dennett

Daniel Dennett, a Tufts University cognitive scientist, published a thought-provoking book, *Consciousness Explained*, in 1991, and anyone reading it will agree that to explain human consciousness is not an easy task. He, of course, explains everything from a naturalistic point of view. Dennett claims to have developed a major new theory of consciousness, yet what is different in his counter-intuitive theory is the claim that human consciousness, rather than being “hard-wired” into the brain’s innate machinery, is more like software “running on the brain’s parallel hardware” and is largely a product of cultural evolution. In another groundbreaking book *Darwin’s Dangerous Idea: Evolution and the Meanings of Life* (1995), Dennett argues for the power of the theory of natural selection (see also Dennett 2006). Populist argumentation for the undergirding rationale of Darwin’s theory of evolution leads him to a conclusion that the evolutionary hypothesis is like a powerful acid, “universal solvent, capable of cutting right to the heart of everything in sight” which dissolves everything at the end and states that “the truly dangerous aspect of Darwin’s idea is its seductiveness” (1995:521). Dennett also claims, in the chapter when he discusses Morality and Religion that Christians fabricate terror, psychological abuse, hell, and create phobia (2006:279–283).

The views of these neo-atheistic thinkers and scientists are built on very naïve views of human nature and a denial of the power of sin. Their positivistic understanding of human nature is doomed to defeat as the history of humanity so often demonstrates. The selfishness of the human heart is naturally incurable and is not going from bad to good but from bad to worse. In communism, everyone was equal, but some people were more equal (those who belonged to the leading party). Corruption is unfortunately a notorious problem in any political system; no one is immune.

It is true that there have been many crimes committed and wars fought in the name of God or Allah (against this misuse of religion, Seventh-day Adventists strongly protest; think of the inquisition, slavery, terrorist attacks, etc.). The violence in the name of God is a black spot, curse, and plague in the history of Christianity and brings great shame on Christians! However, that shameful past needs to include in the picture the atrocities done by atheistic dictators. Neo-atheists would like to deny that many terrible things have also been done as a result of a denial of God. Just remember Hitler, Stalin, Pol Pot, or Máo Zédōng. One simple illustration from

the French Revolution suffices. It is documented that in 1793 (when religion was replaced by reason) Marie-Jeanne Roland was sent to the guillotine to face execution on trumped-up charges. On November 8, 1793, she was beheaded. A few weeks afterwards, Marie Antoinette met the same fate. As Madame Roland was going to her execution, she bowed mockingly toward the statue of liberty in the Place de la Revolution and uttered the words for which she is now remembered: "Liberty, what crimes are committed in your name" (2014).

The point is that we are dealing with a common element, regardless of whether we are religious or atheists, namely, sinful human nature! The sinful heart cannot be changed (maybe it can be improved if there is willingness to cooperate) by education, a better economy, or different circumstances. Only true conversion performed by the power of God's grace, His Spirit, and Word can change the human heart. However, no true unselfish love is possible on the basis of our biological inclinations. At its best, natural human behavior may demonstrate altruistic love, but even it is selfish. From a consistent evolutionary perspective, it is impossible for genuine self-sacrifice or morality to spring from the natural heart. In the end, only the most powerful and strongest survive according to their ideology.

Dark Pictures of God's Character by Christian Theologians

In addition to the four spokesmen for neo-atheism, a few Christian thinkers have also painted a dark picture of God with their pragmatic and biblical-theological arguments that have spread in current literature. The skeletal outline of the biblical narratives are picked up and elaborated upon usually with the author's own spin.

Theological constructs are many and one must seriously ask if they best describe and explain the meaning of difficult biblical narratives. For examples, biblical scholar Julia O'Brien wrestles with images of God as "an abusive husband," "authoritarian father," and "angry warrior" (2008). David Penchansky titles the six chapters of his book in the following way: "The Insecure God," "The Irrational God," "The Vindictive God," "The Dangerous God," "The Malevolent God," and "The Abusive God" (1999). Readers of the Holy Scriptures sincerely struggle with such descriptions of God. Another strong attack on the loving character of God is expressed by Bart D. Ehrman, the James A. Gray Distinguished Professor of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina and a leading authority on the early Church, New Testament textual criticism, and the life of Jesus in his book, *God's Problem: How the Bible Fails to Answer Our Most Important Question — Why We Suffer* (2008).

The most popular arguments often used for purposes of putting God down are the following:

1. God is not good—there is so much innocent suffering in the world (God is blamed for all evil).
2. Abraham has to sacrifice his own son—God is a blood-thirsting monster.
3. Child abuse—42 children were killed by two bears because they were laughing at the prophet Elijah (2 Kgs 2:23–25).
4. God demands a human sacrifice, as in the case of Abraham (Gen 22).
5. God is not great and He is not good—just the opposite of most popular religious teaching.
6. Genocide committed in Canaan by Joshua.
7. Wars performed in the name of God under God's commands.
8. God is cruel because He let people suffer and be punished in Egypt with 10 plagues, including the killing of firstborn sons.
9. God is a jealous and egocentric being (other gods need to be destroyed).
10. Ethnocentrism and racism (God called Abraham and chose a specific nation to be the bearer of light, while placing a curse on Canaan).
11. Bride-price and sex scandals.
12. Inferiority of women to men.
13. Institution of Levirate marriage.
14. Polygamy in the Old Testament.
15. Old Testament legislation with its violence (eye for eye; capital punishment).
16. Incest of Lot with his two daughters.
17. Rape and violence in Judges.
18. Life of David—warrior, polygamist, seeker of revenge, murderer, adulterer, yet called a man according to the heart of God.
19. Innocent suffering of Job that proves “nothing” in the end.

Epicurus, the Greek philosopher of the third century B.C., declared: “Either God wants to abolish evil, and cannot; or he can, but does not want to. If he wants to, but cannot, he is impotent. If he can, but does not want to, he is wicked. If God can abolish evil, and God really wants to do it, why is there evil in the world?” (In Meister 2112:6). Seemingly, evil conflicts with the existence of God so many rush to an easy, simplistic, and false dilemma: either God does not care or God does not exist. How can an allegedly perfect, loving, and omnipotent God exist with so much evil, suffering, and death in the world?

What is one to do with all these issues and the vast atheistic and theological literature on the biblical picture of God? Making God immoral or impotent is nothing new, but the recent neo-atheistic and even biblical interpretations come with innovative twists and argumentation which are very disturbing, shocking, humiliating, and puzzling.

Christian Responses to the Denigration of God's Character

Is God a moral monster? The answer has much to do with a close reading of the sacred text, an understanding of the biblical metanarrative, worldview, and the great controversy. In the final analysis the answer hinges on epistemology, hermeneutics, and the issue of who or what is the final authority in life. There are outstanding biblical and theological studies which can help the searching student to better understand the issues that have been raised. There is no book that can explain them all, and some answers are better than others. The reader needs to be critical and will probably not agree with each detail because different writers explain things from their own perspectives, presuppositions, and pre-understanding. It is also important to remember that our knowledge is limited, but the material presented is extremely helpful, stimulating, and leads to serious reflection.

Among the best recent literature belong the following volumes: *Atheism REMIX: A Christian Confronts the New Atheists* (Mohler 2008), *The Dawkins Delusion? Atheist Fundamentalism and the Denial of the Divine* (McGrath and McGrath 2007), *Is God a Moral Monster? Making Sense of the Old Testament God* (Copan 2011), *The God I Don't Understand* (Wright 2008), *God is Good, God is Great: Why Believing in God is Reasonable and Responsible* (Craig and Meister 2009), *Evil and the Justice of God* (2006), *The Twilight of Atheism: The Rise and Fall of Disbelief in the Modern World* (McGrath 2004), and *God and the New Atheism: A Critical Response to Dawkins, Harris, and Hitchens* (Haught 2008).

See also *When Bad Things Happen to Good People* (Kushner 1981), *When God Doesn't Make Sense* (Dobson 1993), *Defending God: Biblical Responses to the Problem of Evil* (Crenshaw 2005), *Prophets, Sages and Poets* (Crenshaw 2006), *Theodicy in the World of the Bible* (Laato and de Moor 2003), *Theology and the Problem of Evil* (Surin 1986), *The Evils of Theodicy* (Tilley 2000), *Suffering: A Test of a Theological Method* (McGill 1982), *Violence in Scripture* (Creach 2013), *Divine Presence Amid Violence: Contextualizing the Book of Joshua* (Brueggemann 2009), *Arguing with God: A Theological Anthropology of the Psalms* (Janowski 2013), *The Immoral Bible: Approaches to Biblical Ethics* (Davies 2010), *Creation Untamed: The Bible, God, and Natural Disasters* (Fretheim 2010), *The End of Christianity: Finding a Good God in an Evil World* (Dembski 2009), *Can God Be Trusted? Faith and the Challenge of Evil* (Stackhouse 2009), *The Violence of Scripture: Overcoming the Old Testament Troubling Legacy* (Seibert 2012), *Disturbing Divine Behavior: Troubling Old Testament Images of God* (Seibert 2009), *The Human Faces of God: What Scripture Reveals When It Gets God Wrong (and Why Inerrancy Tries to Hide It)* (Stark 2011), *Portraits of a Mature God: Choices in Old Testament*

Theology (McEntire 2013), *Against All Gods: What's Right and Wrong About the New Atheism* (Johnson and Reynolds 2010), *Darwin on Trial* (Johnson 1993), *God Behaving Badly: Is the God of the Old Testament Angry, Sexist and Racist?* (Lamb 2011), *Who's Afraid of the Old Testament God?* (Thompson 2011), *Reading the Hebrew Bible After the Shoah: Engaging Holocaust Theology* (Sweeney 2008), *Problems of Evil and the Power of God* (Keller 2007), *Many Faces of Evil: Theological Systems and the Problems of Evil* (Feinberg 2004), *Dawkins' God: Genes, Memes, and the Meaning of Life* (McGrath 2007), *Shall Not the Judge of All the Earth Do What Is Right? Studies on the Nature of God in Tribute to James L. Crenshaw* (Penchansky and Redditt 2000). See also a critique of neo-atheism by an atheist, *The Devil's Delusion: Atheism and Its Scientific Pretensions* (Berlinski 2009), and *The Devil's Delusion: A Discussion Guide* (West and West 2009).

The Book of Job Scandal

The innocent suffering of Job is the most notorious and significant objection to belief in the goodness and fairness of God. One must ask, what is the primary purpose of this ancient document? Is the author intending to answer the question of why the innocent suffer as it is usually asserted? Is it a story about a wager between God and Satan about who is right and who will win?

I totally disagree with Bart Ehrman who states: "God himself caused the misery, pain, agony, and loss that Job experienced. . . . And to what end? For 'no reason'—other than to prove to the Satan that Job wouldn't curse God even if he had every right to do so. . . . God did this to him in order to win a bet with the Satan. . . . But God is evidently above justice and can do whatever he pleases if he wants to prove a point" (2008:168).

What God allows He does not cause or do. The biblical text reveals that it was Satan who brought on Job's calamities and not God (Job 1:12; 2:6–7). God is the Creator of life and created everything very good (Gen 1:31). Evil comes from another source.

The Issue in the Great Controversy

The most crucial issue in the book is not Job's suffering, even though his suffering plays an important role in the whole drama, but it is not the heart of the matter. It is neither about a capricious or private bet between God and Satan, because the whole drama of the book begins in heaven when of the sons of God assemble before the Sovereign Lord (Job 1:6). In this cosmic scenario, the great controversy unfolds, thus signaling that the problem is not local but universal. The recognition of this cosmic dimension is crucial.

According to Job's prologue (1:8; 2:3), God justifies Job in front of the solemn assembly gathered before Him. Twice in the first two chapters, God declares Job to be right, i.e., blameless, upright, fearing God, and shunning evil. His character is without question, but not because he is sinless (Job knows he is a sinner; see 7:21; 10:6; 14:17). He can be blameless only through God's transforming grace. In these two encounters that God initiates, God directs His words to Satan, and He engages with him in heightened dialogue.

God is presented as passionately standing up for Job, but Satan does not share God's loving affection for Job. Instead he involves Job in his argument against God, and his evil devices go to the very root of his dispute with Him.

Satan opposes God's pronouncement of Job's righteous and confronts Him with a frightful and seemingly innocent question: "Does Job fear God for nothing?" (1:9 NIV).⁵ This cynical inquiry introduces the whole plot of the book, because Satan categorically denies that God is just while justifying Job and proclaiming him perfect. At first glance, the remark appears to be directed against Job, but in reality it is an attack upon God by trying to disprove His statement about Job. Thus, the main theme of the book of Job is God's justice, the trustworthiness of His word. The real drama turns on the fact that God is for us and proclaims us just. Is God just while justifying us? At stake in the cosmic controversy is the ultimate question of whether or not God can be trusted and if His judgment is valid? It must be demonstrated in front of the whole universe that God is the God of love, truth, and justice, and that He is the guarantor of freedom. If His word is not trustworthy, God's whole government will collapse.

Why is Satan's question—whether Job serves God out of love—so evil? When the motives of Job's behavior are questioned, he cannot immediately defend himself. Only time (a long period of time) and the difficulties of life (problems, persecution, and suffering) will reveal who is correct—Job or the accuser.

Satan's Request and the Scandal of the Book

Satan argues that Job's motives are impure. To prove his argument, he demands that God allow him to take everything from Job, because only in this way will God see the real Job: "He will surely curse you to your face" (Job 1:11 NIV). Satan requests that God remove His blessings and protection from Job. When Satan attacks Job's integrity, God allows him to try Job: "Very well, then, everything he has is in your hands" (v. 12 NIV).

Every time I read God's answer, I am irritated. I do not like it. We naturally revolt against such a reaction by God. Those who believe in a good,

loving, just, and all-powerful God have an immense problem with this picture of Him. Believers confess that the Creator and the King of the Universe is the Protector of life, Giver of happiness, Prince of peace, Intervener in human affairs, and Friend of humans. It seems that Job's God is a different kind of God from what they know from other parts of biblical revelation. Faith makes no sense and to some extent it makes the situation even worse.

Why did the Omnipotent God not protect His servant? This is the real scandal in the story. We would like to see the Omnipotent and loving God intervene and immediately silence Satan's accusations and prevent him from harming Job. We wish that God would stop at once the abuse of children, rape of women, concentration camps, murders, suffering, car accidents, plane crashes, collapses of towers, pain, violence, hurricanes, tsunamis, and all the other tragedies.

People ask poignant yet seemingly simple questions in times of tragedy, loss, and war: "Where is God?" The only answer to questions of suffering is that God was exactly in the same place where He was when His son was murdered at the cross. God is always on the side of the oppressed, suffering person. In our suffering, He suffers. "In all their distress he too was distressed, . . . In his love and mercy he redeemed them" (Isa 63:9 NIV).

The book of Job begins with a tension. On the one hand, God put a hedge around Job protecting him from any harm; God blessed him so generously that he had become the Bill Gates of his time. On the other hand, Job is abandoned (for a time) by God and given into the hands of Satan. There is no logic to this. The situation seems self-contradictory.

We live in a world in which evil reigns, and evil is irrational. Let us not try to find a logical answer to the problem of evil. We need to learn how to live with our unanswered questions. From that angle, the book of Job is really a quest for God's visible presence in life.

How Can Satan be Defeated?

The question, How can Satan be defeated? needs to be answered to shed greater light on the whole issue of theodicy and the conflict in the book of Job. Surprisingly, Satan cannot be defeated by logic because against each argument is a counterargument. To refute someone only with external facts has no lasting results. If Satan could be defeated through debate, God would have done it a long time ago for He is the Truth (Exod 34:6; Deut 7:9; 32:4; Ps 31:6; Jer 10:10; John 17:17).

Can Satan be defeated by force? Nothing would please him more than to face force in whatever form. This is exactly what he wants to prove

about God. He wants to accuse Him of using force, but he lacks evidence; he cannot demonstrate it. Of course, Satan could be silenced by physical power if God chose to do so. The Omnipotent Creator is also the Mighty Warrior (Exod 15:3; Judg 6:12; Isa 42:13; Jer 20:11). In that case, however, God would be accused of not playing fair because He is stronger and thus has an advantage over Satan. The great controversy does need to be won but in a different way, by moral power. But how?

Victory through Weakness

Satan can be defeated only by someone who is *weaker* than he is, and God can do it only with pure ammunition—love, truth, justice, freedom, and order. Satan draws different weapons from an evil arsenal: ambition, pride, selfishness, lies, deceit, violence, anger, hatred, prejudice, racism, terrorism, addictions, manipulation, etc. How often we wonder why our Almighty God allows tragedies to happen in the lives of good people, forgetting that God's victory is not won by power or force. Our gracious Lord is not acting like a superman. He wins by humility.

This is the reason for the incarnation. The God of the whole universe had to become weak in order to defeat evil. Only with the frailties of humanity could He defeat Satan. On the cross of Calvary, the Creator God demonstrated His love, truth, and justice. The suffering God, hanging on the cross, is a victorious God. He lived a life in total dependence on and in relationship with His Father. What a paradox! Sin started with pride but was overcome by humility (Phil 2:5–11; Isa 14:12–15).

In the story of Job, only Job himself, who is weaker than the devil, could refute Satan's argument, defeat him, and thus prove that God was right when He justified him and stood on Job's side! Job overcame the devil not because he was so good or strong (Job 7:21; 10:6; 14:17), but because he totally surrendered his life to God. He did this in full confidence and trust in the God who gave him strength and victory (13:15; 19:25–27; 42:5). Paul says eloquently: "When I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor 12:10 NIV).

When Job demonstrated that he loved God above all, God's standing up for him was vindicated. His justice prevailed. God is just while justifying us because His grace and presence, even though very often unseen and silent, sustains His people. God demonstrates that He rules in love and justice. Thus, God's justice and theodicy prevails. The beauty of God's character brilliantly shines, because our God is a God of love, truth, and justice.

Our Primary Task

The first task of the followers of Christ is to present a right picture of

God and His character to this world. This is the work needed to be accomplished before the second coming of Christ, because Satan has grossly distorted the character of God from the very beginning (see Gen 3:1–6). Today the postmodern attacks on God, His character, and the Scriptures are more sophisticated and stronger than ever. Once again our task is to be witnesses for God and let His glory shine through our characters (Rev 14:7).

Revelation 18:1 states that at the end of world's history the glory of God will shine throughout the world. The last work of God's people will be to let God illuminate the world with His glory through His people. This will be the most powerful argument in favor of God's existence and love, and His true character will be defended. God's existence must be shown in the lifestyle of God's followers. His people need to live to the glory of God, reflecting in their character the loving character of God. According to 2 Thess 1:3–5, the evidence that God is true and His judgments are just is the living faith and love of believers!

If God's followers are spiritually dead then God is dead too, and Nietzsche's slogan "God is dead" would be right! We are a spectacle to the world and to the whole universe (1 Cor 4:9)! Ellen G. White powerfully explains our role in the parable about the 10 virgins when she interprets the work of wise virgins:

So the followers of Christ are to shed light into the darkness of the world. Through the Holy Spirit, God's word is a light as it becomes a transforming power in the life of the receiver. By implanting in their hearts the principles of His word, the Holy Spirit develops in men the attributes of God. The light of His glory—His character—is to shine forth in His followers. Thus they are to glorify God, to lighten the path to the Bridegroom's home, to the city of God, to the marriage supper of the Lamb. The coming of the bridegroom was at midnight—the darkest hour. So the coming of Christ will take place in the darkest period of this earth's history. . . . It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. Men are losing their knowledge of His character. It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. At this time a message from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. His character is to be made known. Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy, and truth. This is the work outlined by the prophet Isaiah in the words, "O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him; behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him." Isaiah 40:9, 10. Those who wait for the Bridegroom's coming are to say to the people, "Behold your God." The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is

a revelation of His character of love. The children of God are to manifest His glory. In their own life and character they are to reveal what the grace of God has done for them. The light of the Sun of Righteousness is to shine forth in good works—in words of truth and deeds of holiness. (1941:415, 416, emphasis supplied)

Many biblical texts assure that God is abundant in love (Exod 34:6-7; Ps 100:5; 117:2; 136:1–26; Rom 5:5, 8; 1 John 3:1; 4:16). “Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God’s kindness leads you toward repentance?” (Rom 2:4 NIV). “Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him” (Ps 34:8 NIV). The God of the Bible is the God of love, truth, justice, freedom, and order!¹⁶

In the time of deep trouble, there are no easy answers and often there are no answers. In such situations, people need to focus on the big picture of God’s revelation that ultimately testifies about the goodness of God. An inscription was found on a wall in a cellar in Cologne, Germany, where Jews hid from the Nazis. The anonymous author, who perished with many others, left behind the following profound words: “I believe in the sun even when it does not shine. I believe in love, even when I do not feel it. I believe in God, even when He is silent” (Waldman 2005:197; see also Borowitz and Patz 1985:88).

The best proof of God’s existence and His goodness is our personal experience with Him. Only our appreciation of Christ’s ultimate sacrifice for us on the cross can give us inner peace and assurance of His love in times when calamities, struggles, and tragedies of life strike. Christ-like Christians are the best proof for God’s presence among us. Loving Christians are the ultimate argument for the God of love.

Notes

¹The Czech Republic is considered to be the most atheistic country in the world. The main reason for this situation is that this country has one of the worst histories of re-catholicization (the forced process through which the Protestants were brought back to the bosom of the Roman Catholic Church) after the Battle of White Mountain in 1620. Also the world wars and influence of Nazism and then communism played significant roles. The cynicism toward religion and material pragmatism has strong roots in this society and has brought their fruits.

Statistics vary, for example, according to the Eurobarometer Pole of 2010, only 16% of the Czechs believe there is a God. In 2001, the Czech Statistical Office provided census information on the ten million people in the Czech Republic: 59% had no religion, 32.2% were religious, and 8.8% did not answer. The next census in 2011 provided the following figures: 34.2% not religious, 20.6% religious and

45.2% no answer. According to the Gallup Pole in Europe (2007–2008), the lack of importance of religion was 74% among the Czechs.

Atheism is not something new that would start with the French Revolution and expand with Lenin and the Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917. Even though traces of atheism can go back to some Greek philosophers and thinkers in Asia of the sixth or fifth centuries before Christ, the spread of atheism slowly began after the renaissance and the reformation but boomed with the French Revolution.

²Vladimir I. Lenin, "About the attitude of the working party toward the religion," in *Collected Works*, vol. 17, p. 41.

³Augustin well expressed people's basic desire for God: "You move us to delight in praising You; for You have formed us for Yourself, and **our hearts are restless till they find rest in You**" (*The Confessions*, I.1; emphasis added).

⁴His main works include: Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene* (new ed.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989); idem., *The Blind Watchmaker: Why the Evidence of Evolution Reveals a Universe Without Design* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1986); idem., *A Devil's Chaplain: Reflections on Hope, Lies, Science, and Love* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2003); idem., *The God Delusion* (New York: Bantam Books, 2006); idem., *The Greatest Show on Earth : The Evidence for Evolution* (New York: Bantam Press, 2009); idem., *The Magic of Reality* (New York: Free Press, 2011); idem., *An Appetite for Wonder: The Making of a Scientist* (New York: Bantam Press, 2013).

⁵To understand Satan's motive, it is necessary to study the key words in the question: "for nothing." The Hebrew term for this occurs four times in the book (1:9; 2:3; 9:17; 22:6) It can be translated also as "gratis," "gratuitously," "without a reason," "for nought," "freely," "disinterestedly," "for no purpose," "in vain," "without cause." Satan's question can be stated thus: Does Job serve God disinterestedly? Is his piety unselfish and devotion wholehearted? Or expressed differently: Does he serve God out of love, i.e., for nothing?

Jan Hus proclaimed: "The truth will prevail" and the Hussites adopted that phrase for themselves that God's truth would prevail. When communists were in power, they also spoke that truth would prevail, meaning "their" truth. The first president after the Velvet Revolution in 1989, Václav Havel, ingeniously improved the slogan to say, "Truth and love will prevail." But still one more crucial element is missing, namely "justice," so my personal motto is: "The truth, love, and justice of God will prevail!" I think that is an adequate description of God's government and of who God is. He is the God of love, truth, and justice.

Jan Hus's famous phrase in respect to truth is: "Seek the truth, hear the truth, learn the truth, love the truth, speak the truth, hold the truth and defend the truth until death." "Truth prevails" was adopted as a motto by the first President of Czechoslovakia Tomáš Masaryk in 1918 and then echoed in Václav Havel's notion of "life in truth" and in his 1989 freedom campaign slogan, "Truth and love must prevail over lies and hatred." Jan Hus and Jan Amos Komenský (John Amos Comenius) connected the truth with theological aspects, while in Masaryk's ethical concepts truth was seen as the opposite of lies. Hus's credo traditionally has been seen as testifying to moral and spiritual truth. The Charter 77 movement had the motto "Truth prevails for those who live in truth."

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FELIPE E. TAN

Ellen G. White on City Missions

Introduction

On May 16, 1913, the General Conference opened its 38th session at Takoma Park, Washington, DC. Ellen White who lived at Elmshaven in California at that time could not attend the session due to her advancing age. However, she sent two communications addressed to the General Conference attendees. In the first, she welcomed those who “have labored in distant lands and in the home land” encouraging and assuring them of God’s sustaining grace. Near the end of this first message, she wrote:

I have been deeply impressed by scenes that have recently passed before me in the night season. There seemed to be a great movement—a work of revival—going forward in many places. Our people were moving into line, responding to God’s call. My brethren, the Lord is speaking to us. Shall we not heed his voice? Shall we not trim our lamps, and act like men who look for their Lord to come? (1913a:34)

Pastor A. G. Daniells, president of the General Conference, read Ellen White’s second message on the morning of May 27, 1913. In this communication, she narrated her travel following the General Conference of 1909 attending camp meetings and other gatherings in New England, the Central States, and the Middle West. She encouraged the pioneers and laborers in their ministry. Ellen White assured the delegates that “God of Israel is still guiding his people, and that he will continue to be with them, even to the end.” Then she challenged the church leaders and members to move forward.

Christ is opening the hearts and minds of many in our large cities. . . . The large and small cities, and places high and afar off, are to be worked, and worked intelligently. Never draw back. The Lord will

make the right impressions upon hearts, if we will work in unison with his Spirit. (White 1913b:164)

Ellen White wrote extensively on evangelism, and in particular, on various areas related to work in the cities.¹ This paper is a review of her ideas on the work in the cities.² It will investigate Ellen White's statements on three aspects of city work: God as the author of work in the cities, those who carry out that work, and the methods to be used. The final section will contain observations and a conclusion regarding work in the cities.

God—the Author of Work in the Cities

The Bible and the writings of Ellen White point to God as the source of the message and the author of city work. The divine mandate is clearly stated in the gospel commission (Matt 28:18; Rev 14:6-7). Ellen White portrayed God as one who closely followed the church leaders' planning and deliberation regarding God's work.

One of dignity and authority—One who is present in all our council meetings—was listening with deepest interest to every word. He spoke with deliberation and perfect assurance. "The whole world," He said, "is God's great vineyard. The cities and villages constitute a part of that vineyard. These must be worked." (1948a:34-35)

The context of the above statement, written on April 1, 1874, was a dream she had of church leaders planning. Due to limited financial resources and small number of ministers, the leaders thought of beginning work in small places rather than entering large cities. James White, however, urged the leaders "to make broader plans without delay and put forth, in our large cities, extended and thorough effort that would better correspond to the character of our message" (1948a:34). Ellen White also counseled the church leaders that God wanted them to move forward in faith.

It was also God's desire that the church leaders would view the task in a broader perspective.

The heavenly Messenger who was with us said: "Never lose sight of the fact that the message you are bearing is a world-wide message. It is to be given to all cities, to all villages; it is to be proclaimed in the highways and the byways. You are not to localize the proclamation of the message." (1948a:35-36)

In 1874, when Ellen White had a dream regarding evangelizing the cities, was also the same year when the General Conference officially sent

John Nevins Andrews and his children Charles and Mary as the first official missionaries to Europe. God intended the proclamation of the gospel to be a global movement “to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people” (Rev 14:6 NIV).

Laborers in the Cities

Before Christ ascended to heaven, he said to his disciples, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matt 28:18-19). And before Christ returns, he said, “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come” (Matt 24:14). Between Jesus’ ascension and his return, god’s people are tasked to proclaim the gospel to the world.

The worldwide proclamation of the gospel in the cities and elsewhere can only be accomplished when all church members, not just ministers, are involved in the work. Thus, Ellen White wrote the following:

The work of God in this earth can never be finished until the men and women, comprising our church membership rally to the work and unite their efforts with those of ministers and church officers. (1948b:117)

The Lord desires His people to arise and do their appointed work. The responsibility of warning the world rests not upon the ministry alone. The lay members of the church are to share in the work of soul saving. By means of missionary visits and by a wise distribution of our literature, many who have never been warned may be reached. (1963:313)

To the church members already located in the cities, Ellen White urged them to do their part in bearing their share of the work.³ When Stephen Haskell and others were conducting Bible training-school and evening services in New York City in 1902, Ellen White wrote the following: “Let the believers living near the place where you are holding meetings, share the burden of the work. . . . He [God] desires every church-member to labor as his helping hand, seeking by loving ministry to win souls to Christ” (1906:7).

While it is in the order of God that chosen workers of consecration and talent should be stationed in important centers of population to lead out in public efforts, it is also His purpose that the church members living in these cities shall use their God-given talents in working for souls. (White 1911:158)

In connection with Ellen White's call for involvement of church members in working the cities, she wrote about the varied gifts of the church members and the need for training.

Diversity of Gifts

The apostle Paul used the human body to illustrate diversity of spiritual gifts in his epistles (Eph 4:11-13; 1 Cor 12:4-11; Rom 12:4-8). God endowed the believers with a variety of gifts, and designed that they were to work harmoniously. The challenges in evangelizing the cities called for a variety of approaches. Ellen White articulately the same concept in this way:

In connection with the proclamation of the message in large cities, there are many kinds of work to be done by laborers with varied gifts. Some are to labor in one way, some in another. The Lord desires that the cities shall be worked by the united efforts of different capabilities. (1948b:109)

One worker may be a ready speaker, another a ready writer, another may have the gift of sincere, earnest, fervent prayer, another the gift of singing. Another may have special power to explain the Word of God with clearness. And each gift is to become a power for God because He works with the laborer. To one God gives the word of wisdom, to another knowledge, to another faith. But all are to work under the same Head. The diversity of gifts leads to a diversity of operations, "but it is the same God which worketh all in all" (1 Cor 12:6). (1990:223)

Let not one man feel that his gift alone is sufficient for the work of God; that he alone can carry through a series of meetings, and give perfection to the work. His methods may be good, and yet varied gifts are essential; one man's mind is not to mold and fashion the work according to his special ideas. In order for the work to be built up strong and symmetrical, there is a need for varied gifts and different agencies, all under the Lord's direction; he will instruct the workers according to their several abilities. (White 1874:14)

From the same manuscript Ellen White wrote that the truth must not be hidden. Rather, "it must be shone in our large cities. . . . The message you are bearing is a world-wide message. It is to be given to all cities, to all villages; it is to be proclaimed in the highways and the byways" (1874:3).

Ellen White was aware of the difference between laboring in rural areas and the cities. Challenges include the presence of different classes of people in the cities (1948b:113), different nationalities (1948b:121), business

people (1990:217) and tourists (1948b:122). Work in the cities was difficult, she acknowledged, but vitally important. "We feel intensely regarding the work in our cities. There are few ready to engage in the work waiting to be done. There are people of all classes to be met; and the work is difficult" (1946:36).

During her time, preaching was the primary means of evangelism especially in rural areas. Many preachers travelled from place to place as invitations arrived. They stayed where people offered to put them up for the night, and were often called circuit riders.⁴ However, in urging the involvement of all church members and the use of the various gifts or talents in the work in the cities, Ellen White's view on city evangelism was unique in that she moved beyond preaching and focused on reaching the different classes of people through the involvement of church members and the use of their diverse gifts.⁵

Training

In a letter to J. H. Kellogg and his wife Ella in 1892, Ellen White noted a problem in city work and emphasized the need for training.

I have been shown that in our labor for the enlightenment of the people in the large cities the work has not been as well organized or the methods of labor as efficient as in other churches that have not the great light we regard as so essential. Why is this? Because so many of our laborers have been those who love to preach (and many who were not thoroughly qualified to preach were set at work) and a large share of the labor has been put forth in preaching. More attention should be given to training and educating missionaries with a special reference to work in the cities. (1892:3)

Ellen White expected church leaders to lead out in training church members specifically for work in the cities.

It is the duty of those who stand as leaders and teachers of the people to instruct church members how to labor in missionary lines, and then to see in operation the great, grand work of proclaiming widely this message which must arouse every unworked city. . . . God requires that we shall give the message of present truth to every city, and not keep the work bound up in a few places. (1990:215)

In a letter to Stephen Haskell and his wife Hetty who were doing city work in New York City, Ellen White underscored the importance and need of training laborers in the work of the cities.

Your work in New York has been started in right lines. You are to make in New York a center for missionary effort, from which work can be carried forward successfully. The Lord desires this center to be a training-school for workers, and nothing is to be allowed to interrupt the work. (1901:2)

Proper training is indispensable in any plan to work in the large cities. "There should be no delay in this well-planned effort to educate the church members. Persons should be chosen to labor in the large cities who are fully consecrated. . . . Do not send those who are not qualified in these respects" (1948b:119).

Methods of Labor

The early years of the Adventist Church benefited much from preaching and tent evangelism as methods in God's work. But when Ellen White urged the church leaders to evangelize the large cities, she clearly counseled the church to move beyond those methods and explore other ways. "New methods must be introduced. God's people must awake to the necessities of the time in which they are living. . . . Some of the methods used in this work will be different from the methods used in the past; but let no one, because of this, block the way by criticism" (1902:7).

The challenges church workers faced in the cities were greater than those in rural areas. She acknowledged that work in the cities was not easy. "In the cities of today, where there is so much to attract and please, the people can be interested by no ordinary efforts" (1948b:109). This called for extraordinary or innovative efforts in reaching the city people.

They must make use of every means that can possibly be devised for causing the truth to stand out clearly and distinctly. . . . While they are to labor earnestly to interest the hearers and to hold this interest, yet at the same time they must carefully guard against anything that borders on sensationalism. (White 1948b:110)

In her counsel on involvement of church members, Ellen White pointed to the personal approach of Christ during his earthly ministry as a model in approaching the masses in the large cities.

Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, "Follow me." (1942:143)

This personal approach is best accomplished when church members

are mobilized and properly trained to accomplish their tasks. Every person the church members meet is an opportunity for missionary work.

The Lord has presented before me the work that is to be done in our cities. The believers in these cities are to work for God in the neighborhood of their homes. They are to labor quietly and in humility, carrying with them wherever they go the atmosphere of heaven. If they keep self out of sight, pointing always to Christ, the power of their influence will be felt. (1948b:128)

Church members who follow the approach of Christ in reaching people by using different ways of work will be effective in reaching the populations of large cities. The different lines of city work include house-to-house work (1948b:111), medical evangelism (1948a:111), cooking schools (1948a:113), restaurant work (1948a:115-117; 1990:211), tourist centers and centers of commerce (1948b:121). All these approaches provide avenues for personal contact.⁶

An example is the work of Stephen Haskell. On October 2, 1901, Ellen White wrote a letter to Stephen Haskell.

Brother Haskell, the Lord has given you an opening in New York City, and your mission work there is to be an example of what mission work in other cities should be. . . . You are to make in New York a center for missionary effort, from which work can be carried forward successfully. The Lord desires this center to be a training school for workers, and nothing is to be allowed to interrupt the work. (1901:2)

Stephen and Hetty Haskell “rented a sixth-floor suite of rooms and began giving Bible readings to their neighbors in the same apartment house” (Moon 2013:404). The Haskell team included 20 workers—nurses, Bible instructors, cooking school instructors, and young people who sold books and magazines on the streets. They employed different methods in their work in the city. Ellen White commended Haskell’s work which she saw as “an example of what mission work in other cities should be”⁷ (1901:1).

Visual Aids

Ellen White did not originate the various methods of work in the cities. Rather, she kept an open mind and was keen in observing the effective work of others. Such was the case of William W. Simpson who became successful in using three-dimensional visual aids in his preaching in the cities of California. Simpson used papier-maché beasts to illustrate his lectures from the books of Daniel and Revelation which he had rolled out onto the stage at appropriate moment during his preaching. Ellen White

commended this method which proved effective in captivating the attention of the audience in her day (Fortin 2013:511).

Medical Missionary Work

Ellen White also pointed to medical missionary work as an effective entering wedge. “Doors that have been closed to him who merely preaches the gospel will be opened to the intelligent medical missionary” (1946:513). In using Christ as an example of a medical missionary worker, Ellen White wrote that during his ministry “Jesus devoted more time to healing the sick than to preaching” (1940:350). He stands before us “the pattern Man, the great Medical Missionary—an example for all who should come after” (1963:20). She strongly urged workers to use medical missionary work in the cities.

Medical missionary work must have its representatives in our cities. Centers must be made and missions established in right lines. Ministers of the gospel are to unite with the medical missionary work, which has ever been presented to me as the work which is to break down the prejudice which exists in our world against the truth. The medical missionary work is growing in importance, and claims the attention of the churches. It is a part of the gospel message, and must receive recognition. (1963:241)

Medical missions work as the “right, helping hand of the gospel to open the door for the proclamation of the gospel” (1946:513). Ellen White saw the health message as an effective method in reaching some groups of city residents who might not be reached by other means.

Medical missionary evangelists will be able to do excellent pioneer work. The work of the minister should blend fully with that of the medical missionary evangelist. The Christian physician should regard his work as exalted as that of the ministry. Physicians whose professional abilities are above those of the ordinary doctor should engage in the service of God in the large cities. They should seek to reach the higher classes. (1948a:111)

Observations

Ellen White wrote extensively regarding work in the cities. She addressed many aspects of city missions. This paper discussed Ellen White’s views on three areas: God as the author of the work in the cities, the laborers who would do city missions, and methods of labor. The overall general observation is that though the writings of Ellen White on city missions

were written more than 100 years ago, their relevance and significance have not diminished. On the contrary, the growing challenges encountered in city missions showed the currency of her counsels. The timeliness of her views is so striking that one might think Ellen White wrote them for our times. I offer five observations on specific aspects of her ideas on city missions.

1. In Ellen White's first communication to the 38th General Conference Session, she stated, "There seemed to be a great movement—a work of revival—going forward in many places. Our people were moving into line, responding to God's call" (1913a:34). Then in the second communication which A. G. Daniells read before the delegates in the same General Conference session, she wrote, "Christ is opening the hearts and minds of many in our large cities. . . . The large and small cities, and places high and afar off, are to be worked, and worked intelligently" (1913b:164).

The two messages were separate and different. However, these ideas were related. The work in the cities is to be Spirit-led, and the success in presenting the gospel message to the millions of inhabitants in the cities is connected with the leading of the Holy Spirit. The Pentecost experience in the book of Acts illustrates this. After a season of soul-searching prayer, the Holy Spirit empowered the early Christian believers to preach the Gospel in Jerusalem with amazing results. Those who listened were "Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs" (Acts 2:9).

The relationship between revival and the call for work in the cities from the two messages of Ellen White to the General Conference in her day should serve as a blueprint for the Seventh-day Adventist city work in our time. In 2011, Ted Wilson, president of the General Conference, called for renewed revival and reformation. This was followed by a global call to work in the cities. The need for personal and corporate revival is indispensable in the planning and preparation for work in the cities.

2. The centrality of Christ is evident in the writings of Ellen White regarding city missions. This is a significant aspect of Ellen White's views. She always referred to Christ as an example when discussing city missions. She wrote that "Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good" (1942:143). She lifted up Christ as the pattern and example, "the great Medical Missionary" (1963:20). She also noted that during his ministry, Jesus did more healing than preaching (1940:350). Her emphasis on a Christ-centered approach was based on a strong biblical foundation.

3. The involvement of church members in city missions is also strongly

emphasized in the writings of Ellen White. She explicitly stated that God's work on earth could only be finished when "men and women comprising our church membership rally to the work and unite their efforts with those of ministers and church officers" (1948b:117). She also wrote regarding the diversity of spiritual gifts among the members. Success in city missions involves the use of various approaches and employing the different talents of members. "The Lord desires that the cities shall be worked by the united efforts of different capabilities" (1948b:109). Ellen White saw all believers—church members and ministers—working side by side in the proclamation of the gospel to the cities.

4. Ellen White pointed to the training of laborers as a key ingredient for effective work in the cities. A laborer who was successful in rural areas might not be equally successful in the cities. "There should be no delay in this well-planned effort to educate the church members. Persons should be chosen to labor in the large cities who are fully consecrated" (1948b:119). To reach the millions in the cities with the gospel, continuous training is an essential part of city missions. Ellen White wanted to see experienced ministers working the cities while at the same time mentoring younger workers.

5. The different approaches in reaching the cities as presented by Ellen White—house to house work, restaurants, medical missionary work—all had personal contact and stressed one-to-one evangelism. The framework of Ellen White's views on methods of labor is the ministry of Jesus where he mingled with people, got to know them and their needs, showed sympathy, ministered to their specific needs, and won their confidence. It was only then that he encouraged them to follow him (1942:143).

Ellen White was ahead of her times when she described the ministry of Jesus as not only "mingling" with the people but "living" or "dwelling" with them. "In our work we are to remember the way in which Christ worked. He made the world. He made man. Then he came in person to the world to show its inhabitants how to live a sinless life" (1901:1). Ellen White correlated this incarnational ministry with the work of Stephen and Hetty Haskell in New York City as an example of how cities should be worked.

Conclusion

Ellen White's writings clearly show that God was giving insight and guidance concerning work in the cities in her time. In her dream, she saw God follow with great interest the deliberations of the church leaders regarding city missions. She heard God commanding that the cities must be worked (1948a:34-35). God, who oversaw the rise and development of the

Seventh-day Adventist Church, is still interested in seeing his witnesses successfully work in the cities.

Ellen White's views came as a result of God-given instructions on city missions; however, she was not the originator of specific strategies for city work. Rather, she kept an open mind not only to the guidance of God but also to the ideas around her. Ellen White commended and encouraged workers when she learned of their new effective ideas. She commended the work of Stephen and Hetty Haskell in New York City as "an example of what mission work in other cities should be" (1901:1). She commended William Simpson for his creative use of papier mache images in a day when electronic aids were non-existent. Ellen White was innovative in that she integrated divine counsels and practical realities in her philosophy of city work. Her emphasis on the involvement of church members, their training, and the need to meet various needs of different types of people in the cities show a comprehensive approach in fulfilling the gospel commission.

Significant in her views was the centrality of Christ in city work. Ellen White looked upon the pattern of Christ's ministry as an example in city missions. Christ preached the gospel and addressed the spiritual, physical, and emotional needs of the multitude. He lived among the people he was reaching out to. Doing city missions in our time means more than preaching. It also calls for involvement in the life of the community and addressing the felt needs of city people. If Ellen White were to address the Adventist Church today, I am sure she would say, "As Jesus worked, go and do likewise."

Notes

¹ A number of studies have been published on Ellen G. White's writings on city missions: N. C. Ted Wilson, "A Study of Ellen G. White's Theory of Urban Religious Work as It Relates to Seventh-day Adventist Work in New York City," PhD dissertation, New York University, 1981; W. A. Westerhout, *Science of Metropolitan Medical Missionary Evangelism*, 1969, an unpublished manuscript; *Lake Union Herald* published a cover article, "An Appeal to Work in Our Big Cities," June-July 2014, 14-19, a compilation of Ellen White's quotations.

² Ellen White generally used the phrase "work in the cities" in her writings to refer to city missions or city evangelism. I followed Ellen White's usage in the main section of the paper. For the title, observations, conclusion and endnotes, I used "city missions" to reflect current usage. Essentially, all phrases refer the same thing, which is the reaching out to the cities or the proclamation of the gospel to the cities.

- ³ George R. Knight discussed outpost evangelism and city living in his article "Living in Cities," in *The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia*, 714-716. Knight pointed out that Ellen White at one time explicitly encouraged Adventist families to settle in the cities and work from within.
- ⁴ See Hampton E. Walker's "History of Seventh-day Adventist Evangelistic Methods," research paper, Andrews University, 1972. The evangelistic methods Walker surveyed included circuit preaching, publishing work, medical work, camp meetings, literature evangelism, papier mache images, harvest ingathering, telephone evangelism, radio broadcast, television, etc.
- ⁵ "Mobilizing the Laity for Ministry" in Monte Sahlin's *Mission in Metropolis: The Adventist Movement in an Urban World*, Lincoln, Nebraska: Center for Creative Ministry, 2007, provided valuable information on involvement of church members. *Mission in Metropolis* is an important resource on city missions. This book is replete not only with ideas but also with clear examples and stories.
- ⁶ See also Miroslav Pujic on the methods in reaching out to the postmodern generation in "Re-imagining Evangelism in a Postmodern Culture," *Ministry: International Journal for Pastors*, vol. 85, no. 5, May 2013: 13-16.
- ⁷ See Gary Krause for the description of the incarnational ministry of Stephen Haskell in New York City in "Treading Urban Ground Like Jesus," *Ministry: International Journal for Pastors*, vol. 85, no. 5, May 2013: 6-9.

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ANDREWS UNIVERSITY SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST
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Dissertation Abstracts

A BIBLICAL AND MISSIOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR CROSS-CULTURAL MISSION: A CASE STUDY OF THE LOBI FUNERAL RITES IN BURKINA FASO

Boubakar Sanou

Adviser: Gorden R. Doss, PhD

Date completed: May 2015

Problem

Converts to Christianity in traditional contexts often face pressure to continue traditional rituals and practices which sometimes contain unbiblical elements. Non-selective performance of traditional practices can produce dual allegiance and syncretism. Such is the case with Lobi Seventh-day Adventists concerning their traditional funeral rites of passage. Some core elements of these traditional funeral rites, in which all community members are expected to fully participate, conflict with biblical teachings on the human condition after death.

Method

This dissertation starts by laying the theoretical and theological basis for addressing the problem. The dissertation then uses ethnographic research of funeral rites among the Lobi people of Burkina Faso to understand the biblical and missiological issues they raise. The process of data collection during my field research was based on observation of people's behavior at a funeral ceremony and on a purposeful sampling of 16 participants for interviews to have a personal and deeper understanding of the Lobi cultural and religious contexts in relation to funeral rites. I interviewed

three Lobi religious leaders, six Lobi Adventists who have taken part in traditional funeral rites before becoming Adventists, two Lobi Adventists who continue to take part in traditional funeral rites, four Lobi Adventists who are being pressured to participate in funeral rites, and a Lobi Catholic priest who has published on Lobi funeral rites.

Results

My findings broadened my understanding of the religious and sociocultural significance of the Lobi funeral rites as well as the challenges some traditional practices pose to those committed to being fully biblical Christians. A biblical and missiological framework was developed to address the challenges such traditional rites pose to Christian mission in general and to Seventh-day Adventist mission in particular.

Conclusion

Given that the number of converts to Christianity among the Lobi of Burkina Faso is only five percent of their population, the Joshua Project considers them to be an unreached people group. If more Lobi are to be won to Christ and become mature disciples, their real-life situations need to be understood and addressed both biblically and missiologically. A well-planned ethnographic study is helpful in reaching this goal. Biblical and missiological principles derived from such a process can also be generalized to other cross-cultural mission contexts.

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